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• ON THE COVER



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Lyngard for Heal's ceramic **pendant lights** from £195, (left) Lyngard ceramic **vases** from £45, (right) Kähler ceramic **vases** from £25 *shown with* Branch **dining table** from £1,395.

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## **COUNTRY HOMES**

Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 OSU Telephone 020 3148 5000 Email countryhomes@timeinc.com

#### EDITOR

#### Rhoda Parry

DEPUTY EDITOR Jane Akers 020 3148 7313

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Emma Williams 020 3148 7184

HOUSES EDITOR

Vivienne Ayers 020 3148 7194

SHOPPING EDITOR

Holly Phillips 020 3148 7195

STYLE WRITER

**Tara King** 020 3148 7196

STYLE ASSISTANT

Rosanna Johnson 020 3148 7197

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Columba Colivet 020 3148 7190

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Sara Bird (Style); Sarah Wilson (Food and People)

CHIEF SUB EDITOR

Anne Esden 020 3148 7188

SENIOR SUB EDITORS

Ruth Farnsworth 020 3148 7189 Marian McNamara 020 3148 7192 Susan Shepherd 020 3148 7187

ART EDITOR

Meredith Davies 020 3148 7186

SENIOR DESIGNER

Christina McQuillan 020 3148 7899

DESIGNER

Stephanie Allingham 020 3148 7898

EDITORIAL PRODUCTION MANAGER

Nicola Tillman 020 3148 7891

ART PRODUCTION DESIGNER Chris Saggers 020 3148 7896

#### MARKETING

Marketing Assistant Jasmine Guild 020 3148 7691

#### PUBLISHING

Group Managing Director, Lifestyle Fiona Dent 020 3148 5651 PA to Managing Director Donna McConnell 020 3148 5651 Publishing Director Sandy Gale 020 3148 6214 Assistant to Publishing Director Giulietta Vella 020 3148 6214 Publisher Belinda Cooper 020 3148 7666

#### **PRODUCTION**

Group Production Manager Steve Twort 020 3148 5439 Production Manager Alan Taylor 020 3148 5441 Advertising Production Manager Dinah Grimes 020 3148 2669 Digital Producer Andrew Howe 020 3148 3366

#### CIRCULATION

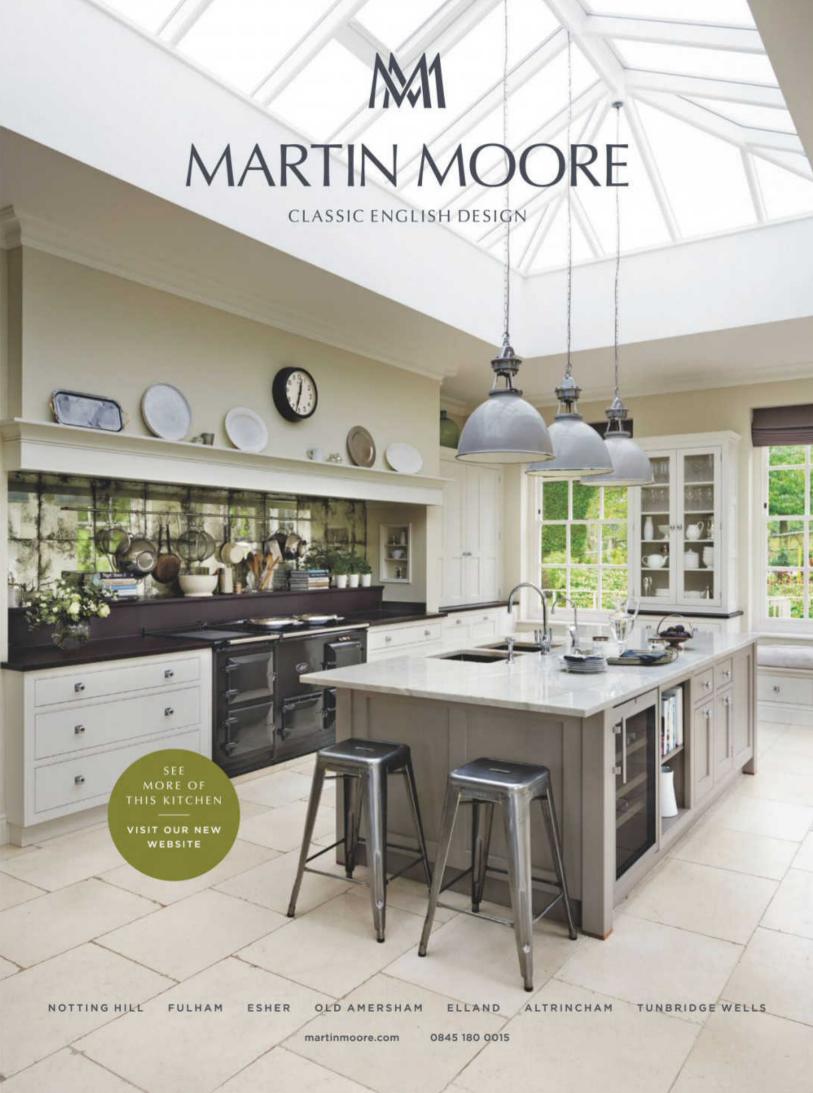
Circulation Manager Paul Burden 020 3148 3454

#### ADVERTISING

Commercial Director Joanne O'Hara 020 3148 7642 PA to Commercial Director Lucienne Watson 020 3148 7641 Advertisement and London Sales Manager Ruth Roscorla 020 3148 7639 International/Luxury Account Manager Carole Bunce 020 3148 7620 Head of Agency Sales Lindsay Dean 020 3148 3668 Head of Classified Sales Howard Jones 020 3148 2535 Group Classified Manager Emma van der Veen 020 3148 2635 Subscriptions Marketing Manager Diane Hornby 020 3148 6295 Projects Director Kathryn Cane 020 3148 7610 Creative Media Manager Emilie Morrissey 020 3148 3647 Sales Manager (Inserts) Canopy Media Lindsay Martin 020 7611 8151 Assistant Syndication Manager Efi Mandrides 020 3148 5485

#### REGIONAL ADVERTISING

Regional Sales Director Katrina Hutchison 0161 601 3720 Group Head (Inserts) Amanda Dean 0161 601 3725



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## COUNTRY HOMES



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- Get the latest news: twitter.com/ countryhomesmag
- Go behind the scenes: instagram.com/countryhomesmag
- Pin our favourite things: pinterest.com/ countryhomesmag







1 The clocks going forward and more hours of daylight!
The Cookhouse wall clock, H35xW35xD10cm, £65, Newgate.
2 Pretty blooms on cushions. Spring Bloom Jacquard cushion, £15, Marks & Spencer. 3 Colour-pop furniture to perk up a room.
Le Cocktail footstool, H40xW82xD62cm, £295, Oliver Bonas.







**4** A soft layer at night to protect against lingering nips in the air. Bedspread, 160x240cm, £185, Lexington. **5** Storage in cute styles. Dipped belly basket, W35cm, £29, Olli Ella. **6** A thoughtful note to nearest and dearest. Botanical greeting card, £3, Rifle Paper Co. **7** A change from the mobile with the help of a retroinspired friend. 746 telephone, 21x22cm, £49.95, Wild & Wolf. **>>** 

#### COUNTRY DAYS





8 Atmospheric candlelit suppers. Dinner candles gift pack, H8in, £6.50, St Eval Candle Company. 9 Relaxed living. The Snowdrop armchair, £760, Sofa.com. 10 Changing from winter boots to more colourful footwear! Suede desert boots, col Pale Green, £95, Clarks. 11 Charming garden motifs decorating china. Catch Me If You Can mug, H8.3cm, £10, Sophie Allport.



**12** Hand-picked herbs to garnish supper. Metal herb garden, H15xW30xD21cm, £29.95, Dotcomgiftshop. **13** Refreshing scent wafting through a room. Wild Mint candle, £22, House of Fraser. **14** Vibrant pattern to lift your mood. Stalactites throw, 150x180cm, £149, Sheridan.**15** Embossed lace print details on earthenware. Floris cereal bowls, H8x14.2cm diameter, £35 for 4, Loaf.



# FEATURE HOLLY PHILLIPS STYLING (MAIN) BENTE HALKJÆR/HOUSE OF PICTURES; (MOODBOARD) HOLLY PHILLIPS PHOTOGRAPHS (MAIN) KIRA BRANDT/HOUSE OF PICTURES; (MOODBOARD) TIMOTHY YOUNG

## Colour of THE MOMENT

BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO ROOM SCHEMES WITH A REJUVENATING PALETTE OF CALMING MINT GREENS – AS INVITING AND FRESH AS THE FLAVOUR ITSELF!



Wallpapers (from far left), Beech, col Document Green, W136cm, £60 m, Lewis & Wood. Apple Garden, £69 a roll, Majvillan at Nubie. Printed cotton ribbon, 594315, £3.20 for 5m; mini wooden clothes pegs, £1.20 for 50, all Hobbycraft. Fabrics (clockwise, from top left), Haiti, col Eau de Nil, £53 m, Villa Nova. Gardening, £19 m, Sophie Allport. Kew, col Eau de Nil, £93 m, Roger Oates. Flower Stencil, col Aquamarine/Moonstone, £130 m, Vanderhurd. Carpets (from top), Padstow, col Spearmint Spot, £75 sq m; Majestic, col Cirio, £100 sq m; Padstow, col Spearmint Gingham, £75 sq m, all Brintons. Small utility scissors, £2.95, Dotcomgiftshop. Coloured baker's twine, £4 for 100m, Not on the High Street. Paints (from top), Winter Sage, £36 for 2L, Paint by Conran. Mint Street, £42 for 2.5L; Beauvais (background), £42 for 2.5L, both Mylands. Poetic, £41 for 2.5L, Autentíco. Absinth, £50 for 2.5L, Fired Earth. Mint dish, stylist's own.



Bathrooms matter. Visit the experts.



#### PULL UP A CHAIR



Celebrating its fifth anniversary,
Another Country has launched
the Dorset series, a stylish
collection of furniture created
by up-and-coming designers,
including this solid-oak chair by
David Irwin. The contemporary
design draws on two 19thcentury chair styles traditionally
found in public houses, smoking
rooms and cottages. Hardy chair,
£475, Another Country.

#### our favourite designer Kate Thorburn

Yorkshire-based surface pattern designer Kate set up her country business, What Kate Loves, in 2014. Her signature blue and white collection features beautiful illustrations of florals, insects and vintage collectibles - a contemporary take on traditional delftware.

How did your business come about? I wanted to create my own range after training in ceramic design in Stoke-on-Trent, an area famous for its potteries. I was shocked to see how it had suffered with the decline in manufacturing. All my pieces are proudly made there – I hope that one day it will be returned to its former glory!

What's the inspiration behind your designs?

I've always been drawn to organic forms, such as the patina on stone walls, the textures of old wood, and the patterns of wild flowers. I love to roam in places like the Yorkshire Dales and the Scottish Highlands, where there's so much undisturbed beauty. It can take me hours to walk through a field, as I'm taking endless photos along the way!

Can you describe the design process? My designs always start off with a simple



sketch - I love drawing! I used a calligraphy pen for the majority of my current range, but I also enjoy experimenting with a variety of inks and pens to create interesting lines.

**Tell us about your favourite piece...** It has to be my elegant statement bowl (above, £40, Not on the High Street), which sits perfectly on any table. I've used most of my illustrated floras in the design, as well as the odd butterfly and some small crawly creatures!

Describe your creative style in three words.
Timeless, unique

and delicate. **Call 07540 953539** 



or visit notonthe highstreet. com/what kateloves.



#### Celebrate the woodland

Spring signals new beginnings, so why not give your home a fresh look with Sanderson's new Woodland Walk collection? It epitomises the beauty of the country at this time of year. Hand-drawn and hand-painted designs feature on fabrics and wallpapers with an array of coordinating plains, all inspired by seasonal colours, the British landscape and wildlife. We love the charming print, Squirrel & Hedgehog, available in four softly coloured linen mixes. An upholstered headboard in Mint Green, combined with a classic country-check bedlinen and assorted cushions, makes a relaxed statement in a pretty country bedroom scheme.

#### We want this now ...



The Leiston is a new addition to the Heritage Copper collection at Jim Lawrence, and shares its name with the pretty Suffolk village not far from where it's made. Rich in colour and unfussy in design, the pendant light makes a stunning focal point. Choose from a painted cream or natural copper interior. £165, Jim Lawrence.

EFATIRE TARA KING

## Garden notes

We want this now...



Here's a fun way to plan a border. Flick through the split pages of this book for combinations of shrubs, bulbs and perennials for shade, sun, scent or wildlife. Beds & Borders - The Mix & Match Guide to Beautiful Planting by Simon Maughan and Jane Courtier (£9.99, Ivy Press), The Worm That Turned.

#### OUR FAVOURITE GARDEN DESIGNER

Stephen Woodhams

Chelsea Gold medal-winner Stephen Woodhams's latest book, Garden Design Solutions (£25, Jacqui Small), draws on an international career in garden design to give brilliant ideas for outdoor living and making the most of your outside space.

#### What are your three golden rules of garden design? Always think about irrigation

- where does the water come

from and how much is there? Plant for the long term and consider how large trees and shrubs will grow. And have a realistic budget; designing something that never gets built wastes everybody's time. Do you use sculpture in a country garden? I love the natural stone sculptures by Tom Stogdon, such as his Cotswold stone circle (above), or an ammonite piece. I also use vintage milk churns or watering troughs as planters. Does every garden need a focal point? It helps - it can be a view along a grass path with borders on either side

a specimen tree. How has your background in floristry shaped your career? I'm fascinated by

and a sculpture at the end,

an urn on a plinth or even



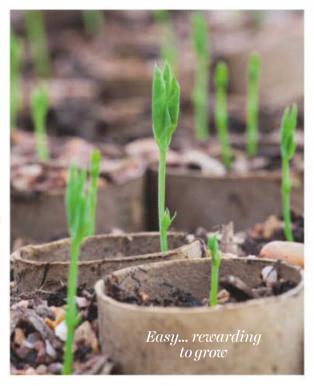
every detail of designing gardens and love creating interesting planting combinations, using colour and texture, echoing the colours inside the home with planting colours, and so on. Does inspiration ever run dry? Hardly ever, but travel always sparks new ideas. How does your own garden fare, or are you too busy designing other people's? In Oxfordshire, it's a cottage garden so quite wild, and full of delphiniums, peonies and roses. My Ibiza garden is very rustic, as it's in a pine forest.

Three favourite plants? Chimonanthus praecox,



all varieties of hellebore and Hamamelis mollis.

Visit stephen woodhams.com.



#### Sow sweet peas

Sweet peas are a cottage-garden classic, happy in pots or borders. Go for a riot of colour or just a few varieties for a quieter display. Sow seeds 8-10cm deep in small pots or modules (deep root-training modules are ideal as the roots like deep runs), then plant out when as tall as a finger. Or sow where you want them to grow; dig in plenty of organic matter and a sprinkling of general fertiliser and give them a trellis, arch or wigwam of bamboo canes to scramble up. When seedlings are 10cm, pinch out the tips to promote bushiness - you'll have flowers and scent, come July. We love pale pink Lathyrus odoratus 'John Gray' from sweet pea specialist Roger Parsons.

#### CHOCOLATE VINE



This pretty semi-evergreen is perfect for growing on wires to cover a fence in sun or semi shade. Called Akebia quinata, its deep burgundy trailing flowers bring an understated elegance in early spring together with a divinely spicy chocolate-vanilla fragrance. £19.99 for a 2L pot, Crocus.

(E **PHOTOGRAPHS** (SWEET PEAS) JONATHAN BUCKLEY, BOTH GAP PHOTOS FEATURE FRANCESCA CLARKE (AKEBIA) TOMMY TONSBERG, BC



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Unmistakably Mark Wilkinson

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## Food notes

#### Join the cake club

Award-winning
Shipston-on-Stour
bakery Meg Rivers
makes cakes in small
batches, using natural
ingredients, which
are then finished
by hand. We love the
idea of signing up to
its Cake Club, which
delivers a delicious
cake to your door
every month. Spring



offerings include Simnel Cake, Lemon Polenta Cake and the delicious Coffee and Walnut Cake (above). From £65 for a three-month subscription.

#### OUR FAVOURITE ARTISAN PRODUCERS

#### Frankie Fox and Desiree Parker

The Foraging Fox, makers of beetroot ketchups, began life when Frankie Fox had a glut of beetroot and apples in her garden in Essex. It took three years to perfect a ketchup recipe, and in 2014 Frankie asked Desiree Parker to be co-founder of the new company.

What's so special about your ketchup? Containing one and a half beetroots, each bottle is loaded with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. It's natural and gluten free and, most importantly, tastes great.

Have you won any awards? In 2015 Beetroot Ketchup won the Innovation category at The Veggie Awards and was Highly Commended in the FreeFrom Food Awards. We also won Great New Idea at the Farm Shop & Deli Show and we were shortlisted in Ocado's Britain's Next Top Supplier competition.

What does your ketchup work best with? It goes particularly well with scrambled eggs and smoked salmon, bangers and mash,



also be used as a base for salad dressings, soups, risotto or marinades.

What's new? Our Hot Beetroot Ketchup contains chilli and horseradish and has just started to appear on shop shelves. Try it in a Bloody Mary! There are plans for a third incarnation to coincide with the barbecue season.

Surprise us... Frankie [below left, with Desiree] was once

left, with Desiree] was once on TV pitted against a pig, a spaniel and an electronic nose hunting for truffles when she was 10, after breaking the UK fungi foraging record with her father.



Roland Fox. For more details, visit foragingfox. com, 0333 444 0380.



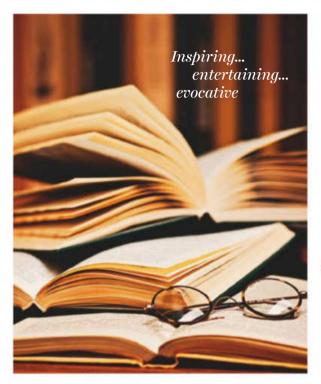
#### Try salsify – the new root

You may first come across these muddy, woody items in your vegetable box, farm shop or at your local market. And, despite the less than promising look, salsify is a lovely root vegetable to cook. You could keep it simple and roast peeled whole salsify with a little rapeseed oil, crushed garlic and a bay leaf for around 20 minutes in a medium oven. Sprinkle with sea salt to serve. Salsify can also be boiled or mashed, and works well in a creamy gratin or comforting stew or in a soup with roasted garlic and shallots. Alternatively, cut salsify into batons, coat it with breadcrumbs and deepfry it to serve with dip as an appetiser.

#### We want this now ...

Once a staple of the country kitchen, the chicken brick is back. To cook poultry without added fat, pour a glass of water into the base, add the bird, replace the lid and roast, uncovering near the end of cooking time to baste and brown. Easy to clean, it can be used for stews, too. The brick shown costs £52 from David Mellor.

## Out & about



#### Visit a book festival

Join authors and fellow bookworms at the Bath Literature Festival (26 February to 6 March, bathfestivals.org.uk). Enjoy novels and historical prose brought to life through talks, masterclasses, even theatre - Austentatious is a comic take on Jane Austen. Modern-day authors include Tracy Chevalier; nature writer Patrick Barkham, who discusses our coastal landscape; and John Suchet, who shares the history of Vienna and the Johann Strauss dynasty from his new book, The Last Waltz. The Oxford Literary Festival (2-10 April, oxfordliteraryfestival.org) offers family-friendly events for children and younger readers in the university's quads and cloisters, with over 300 authors sharing their love of books with all ages.

#### LEARN MILLINERY

Get set for Ascot by creating your very own fascinator on a course with Katherine Elizabeth Millinery. Learn how to design your own headpiece by blocking and crafting sinamay into an arty shape

and decorating it with fabric netting, beading and ribbon. The course is on 19 and 20 March, 10.30am to 4.30pm, at Craft House, 33-35 St John's Square, London EC1, and costs £190 including refreshments. Call 020 7490

0303, millineryhouseevents.com.

The place to eat...



At the Crab & Boar in Newbury, head chef Tom Scade offers fine country food and fresh seafood. After eating in the awardwinning restaurant, quests can stay overnight, choosing from 14 cosy rooms - some with a hot tub. Outside. put a spring in your step by exploring beautiful walking trails and cycle paths overlooking Berkshire's chalk downs. Call 01635 247550, crabandboar.com.

#### OUR FAVOURITE SHOP I&JL Brown

At family-run I&JL Brown in Herefordshire, Julian **Brown and Simon Hilton** offer bespoke British-made and antique furniture, accessories and lighting.

What inspired you to open the shop? It was founded by my parents [says Julian] more than 30 years ago and, when asked the same question, they cited avarice! They were commercially minded teachers, who often found themselves wanting to make extra cash. When an antique dealer friend asked them to help out one day, they realised a market existed for country antique furniture. Specialising in country chairs to begin with, the business has evolved to offer bespoke furniture and now has clients in the UK and worldwide, with showrooms in Hereford and Chelsea.

How would you describe the shop's style? We love to ask customers, new and returning, why they come to I&JL Brown. We get some wonderful feedback: people love coming to find us, or 'discovering' us for the first time, because we source unusual items. The Hereford showroom is vast with so



much to find and stock that is constantly revolving. What makes your shop special? The people - we have great staff, all of whom have the ability to help our customers home in on what they are looking for. We can provide furniture that is unique, which people will treasure for many years to come. I always tell customers not to buy anything we have unless they absolutely love it and can walk into the room where it sits and say to themselves, 'I am really pleased we bought that.' Anything else? The showroom is the sort of place you buy things that you never knew you needed. You see room sets or table settings that make you go, 'Wow!' We try to make things a little special here. **I&JL Brown, Whitestone** Park, Whitestone, Herefordshire, 01432 851991, ijlbrown.com.

PHOTOGRAPHS (BOOKS, FASCINATOR) SHUTTERSTOCK FEATURE COLUMBA COLIVET











### What makes this house a home...

'The kitchen – it's
the hub of the
home, where we
all gather to share
stories and food
with friends
and family'











A sunny spring day, it's hard to understand why Linda Biggs and her husband, Roger, didn't fall in love with their flint and timber-clad cottage surrounded by the South Downs at first sight. 'The location was stunning, but the property needed lots of work and didn't tick all our boxes,' says Linda. 'We put in a sealed bid, thinking that if we didn't get it we weren't bothered, although we could see it had potential.' The house was a long building filled with small, dark rooms, with an old garage set at right angles to it. 'Most people found it difficult to see past those little rooms and the unsightly 1980s red brick extension,' she says.

When their bid was accepted, however, Linda and Roger grew excited about the changes they might make. The old kitchen and dining room were obvious contenders, as they were at the wrong end of the house with tiny windows. Taking down the dividing walls to create larger spaces made sense, but left the couple with the big question of where to put the new kitchen. 'We wanted a large, light living-room-cum-kitchen that had the downland views,' says Linda.

Architect Ian Adam-Smith gave the project new momentum. He suggested converting the garage into a kitchen, and linking it to the house with a new, square oak-framed living room. That section of the house would then be one large, L-shaped family living space. Ian's design turned the Biggs's home into what he calls a 'perfect little big house', with intimate spaces at one end and the large living space at the other. This is where the family spends most of the time. The staircase was also moved. 'The existing stairs would have carved up our new family living room, so we redirected them, turning what had been another tiny living room into a hallway,' says Linda.

She then focused her attention on the oppressive black beams. 'I had trouble convincing Roger that we should paint them, but he remembered the dust involved in sandblasting old beams in a cottage he'd once owned so eventually agreed to painting them white,' Linda says. This decision set the tone for the rest of the interior: a laid-back look featuring natural textures and upcycled fabrics. 'I like old French linen grain sacks for sofa covers, mattress ticking for blinds and curtains, and individual pieces from antiques fairs,' she says. 'I'm also a fan of texture,' she adds, pointing out patches of old brick, where plaster was taken off, and areas of wood panelling that enrich the living room, bathroom and Linda's study at the far end of the house. Here, some of her moodboards are on display from the interiors course she is doing at KLC School of Design.

'I've moved from pastels to a more graphic feel, but I do like pops of colour,' she says. 'Having done up five houses, I've learnt to go for timeless ingredients – stone or sisal floors and solid-wood furniture, with a nod to current trends rather than slavishly following fashion.'

With the house complete, Linda is considering her next project. 'I think it will be the outhouse with its lovely brick chimney,' she says. 'At the edge of the field, it's a potential gem and, just as we do the main house, I know we'll all enjoy it when it's finished.' >>



#### AT HOME WITH...

Owners Linda Biggs and her husband, Roger, who is managing director of an electronics company. They bought the house in 2010 and live here with children Abbie, 10, Charlie, eight, as well as Finn the Saluki and Oscar the cat.

House Two 19th-century
Grade II-listed farmworkers' cottages,
extended in the 1980s and now
linked to a converted garage.









What we love most about living here...

'Sitting on the sofa in our new living room on a Sunday morning, sipping coffee and enjoying the view across the meadows and the South Downs'









Visit... 'West Dean (01243 811301, westdean.org.uk), a house where Edward VII used to stay that's now a college. Walking through the gardens is uplifting and inspirational. There is also a wide selection of art and craft courses on offer.'

Shop at... 'Haus (01428 653336, haus-interiors.co.uk) in Haslemere for vintage linens and decorative objects for the home.'

#### Go for a meal at...

'The Fox Goes Free (01243 811461, thefoxgoesfree.com) at Charlton, near Goodwood, a fabulous family pub with child-friendly garden and delicious country menu.' >>

Main bedroom (Also left)
Vintage-style fabrics add
to the feminine feel. Fabrics,
Cabbages & Roses, Loose
cover, made by Pippa Blacker
Interiors. Furniture, painted
in French Gray; flooring, All
White, both by Farrow & Ball.
Pine dressing table, similar
from Swoon Editions. »

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#### Single armoire

An armoire or narrow wardrobe hides away a multitude of belongings.

#### Need to know...

Painted or revealing the wood's natural grain, this stylish storage furniture comes in many designs. Select a curved or flat top, with hanging space, shelves or drawers. Plainer versions look rustic, while French designs with reeded columns, flowers, leaves and ribbon bows can be delightfully ornate. A crest on top is the final flourish. Only choose an armoire with a glazed door if your shelved linen is in impeccable order; mirrored fronts are more forgiving.

#### Where to buy...

- And So To Bed for a single wood wardrobe with a flat or curved top.
- Antique Pine Workshop for original pine armoires and wardrobes.
- Sweetpea & Willow for a mirrored white armoire with crested top.



**Strike a classic pose.** Brecon **mirror**, H180xW129xD10cm, £1,250, India Jane.



Ensure French flair. Belfort dressing table, H79xW90xD41cm, £159.95, Melody Maison. Hatley **fabric**, £48 m, Cabbages & Roses.

# Be inspired by Linda's main bedroom



**Use toning accessories.** Velvet **cushion,** col Fuchsia Pink, £39.98, Ciel at Not on the High Street. Heart **jug,** £18.99, Gisela Graham.

#### FIND THE PERFECT

LIMED OAK FLOORING



1 Tennyson Oak, from £72.85 sq m; 2 Somerset Oak, from £75.85 sq m; 3 Covent Garden Oak, from £74.85 sq m, all Ecora.





AMANDA CHANT SEMPILL GAVE A RUNDOWN FORMER RECTORY A NEW LEASE OF LIFE WHEN SHE OPENED IT UP TO LET IN THE LIGHT





#### WILTSHIRE RECTORY







#### AT HOME WITH...

Owners Amanda Chant-Sempill and her husband, lan, who are both retired, and have two adult children, Clementine and Hamish. They live here with miniature smooth-haired Dachshund Tallulah.

House A 200-year-old former rectory with three bedrooms.

tee. So much so that when they decided to downsize from their family home after 20 years, because their children had flown the nest, they hoped they would find a property they liked in the same village. 'We had looked at quite a few houses and hadn't found anything,' says Amanda. 'Then one day, on my way to work, I spotted a "for sale" sign in the high street. I had always loved the house that was for sale - a former rectory - but I hadn't realised it was empty and about to go on the market. It was a lovely surprise.'

Amanda and Ian were so keen that they were the first people to view the house. 'It's such a pretty little place from the outside,' says Amanda. 'We loved its exterior. The estate agent didn't even have to put the key in the door - we knew we wanted it!'

However, the house was badly in need of some TLC and a complete renovation. Undeterred, Amanda and Ian were quite prepared to undertake a labour of love in order to create their dream home. They put in an offer straight away and although there was a lot of interest from other people, the couple got the house. 'It worked out perfectly,' says Amanda.

They then spent three months renovating the place. 'We sold our old house and moved out of it in January 2014, >> Hallway Amanda has created a pretty corner with an antique church pew. Throw, Bronte by Moon. Shopping basket, Cath Kidston. Walls, painted in Clay by Little Greene.

Kitchen A central woodburner with log store underneath separates the kitchen from the dining area (opposite). Fire, Stovax. Cabinets, table, Neptune.











Tallulah sitting on top of the sofa. Manon **sofa**, Oka.

then we stayed with friends in the village while the renovations were completed. It worked out really well as we could check on the progress every day.'

The house was gutted. 'We changed everything,' says Amanda. Both ends of the house were re-roofed. It was rewired; ceilings came down; new heating was installed and fireplaces were opened up in the study and living room.

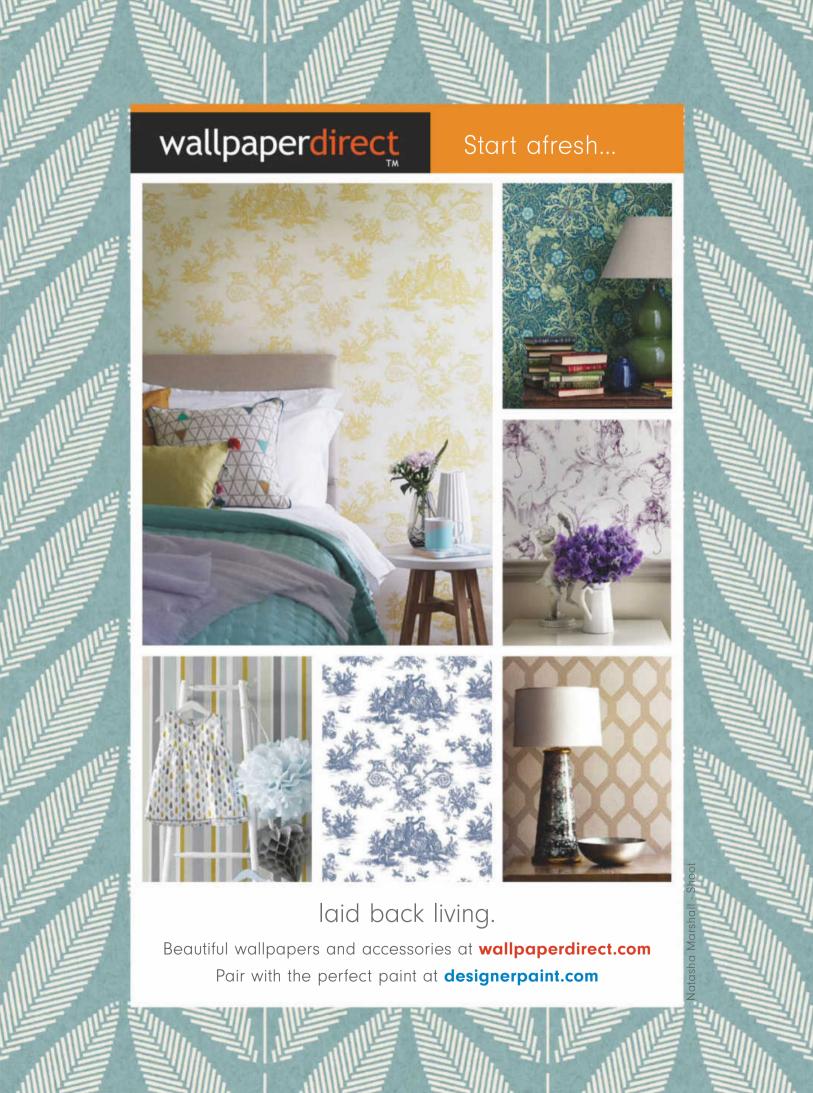
The most ambitious project involved a reconfiguration of the downstairs space. There were four rooms – a galley kitchen, utility, compact dining room and a sun room – that were all very small.

'I wanted to knock it all out and create one large openplan kitchen with a dining and sitting area. I knew it would be lovely and light with a triple aspect. We had a wonderful builder, Trevor Slocombe, who knew all about load-bearing walls and steel supports, so Trevor and I designed it together. I had a vision of a large space with a beautiful log fire in the middle.'

To create a classic space and maximise the room's light and bright feel, Amanda chose a Shaker-style kitchen from Neptune, painted in an off-white shade, with a spacious island to boot. 'I love the cabinets because they look contemporary, yet timeless,' she says. Now the cosy fire can be appreciated by people perched at the kitchen island, as "

Guest bedroom
An antique French
bed takes centre
stage with low-key
black and white
accessories (above,
left). Curtains,
The Magnificent
Material Company.
Lamps, French
Grey Interiors.

Landing
Floor-length
curtains frame
the window at the
top of the stairs.
Bruton Damask
curtain fabric,
Jane Churchill
at Colefax and
Fowler. Side table,
similar from The
French Bedroom
Company.









It was sheer kerb appeal that initially drew Amanda to the former rectory.

well as by those seated at the dining table on the other side. 'The room really is the heart of the home now,' says Amanda.

Upstairs, new bathrooms were installed, with the en-suite bathroom being reconfigured and access changed so that it became a bigger room.

'We weren't daunted by the work because we had great people working on the house,' says Amanda. 'It was really exciting to see it all taking shape.'

Amanda was keen to create an airy interior. 'I love light and space and wanted to bring as much light as possible into the rooms with mirrors and lighting.'

A muted colour palette also helps to keep the rooms bright. 'I chose fairly classic schemes as I like a chic look. I love a mix of old and modern as I think it works so well. We have many old pieces, such as portraits of Ian's family and a drum that was my father-in-law's regimental drum from the Gordon Highlanders, which we use as an occasional table. It's important to include familiar pieces as that's what makes it a home.'

The house was completed two years ago and Amanda and Ian are thrilled with the end result. 'We just love the house – it has such a welcoming atmosphere and is a sociable space with the changes we have made. We enjoy walks in the countryside nearby, the views and the peace. We like living in the village, too – it's a real community.' »

Bathroom The pure white scheme is punctuated by fresh blue and yellow accessories. Bath, floor tiles, Sydenhams. Shelf unit, The White Company.

Main bedroom
Amanda painted
the chest of
drawers, which was
bought at auction.
Vintage chest,
similar from The
French Bedroom
Company. Painted
in Pale Grey by
Annie Sloan.





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Sit tall at a kitchen island. Neptune Montague high-back bar chair, col Pale Stone, £220, John Lewis.



Toast four slices in one go. Dualit four-slot toaster, col Black Gloss, £78.50. Divertimenti.

kitchen

diner



Double-sided insert fire

These contemporary fires and stoves are effective heaters yet don't encroach on your space.

#### Need to know...

For a dramatic effect in an open-plan space, a contemporary insert fire or stove can be built into a brick chimney or enclosed in a purposebuilt wall for a view of the flames that can be enjoyed from more than one side. Heighten the drama with a letterbox-style insert, or select a corner version to catch a glimpse of the flames from more than one angle. A cassette stove or fire has an extra metal wall around the firebox and directs heated air back into the room.

#### Where to buy...

- CVO Fire for double-side gas fires. • DG Fires for a double-sided woodburning stove.
- Lotus for a corner woodburning cassette fire.



Invest in sturdy cookware. Signature casserole, 23cm diameter, £130, Le Creuset. Prochef barbecue board, £88.50, Boos Blocks at Houseology.

#### For more ideas go to housetohome.co.uk/ countryhomesandinteriors



Stick to plain and simple designs. Sockerärt vase, H22cm, £14, Ikea. Lara natural linen tea towels, £14.99 for two, LinenMe.

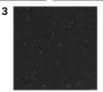


Choose a sleek contemporary oven. Nexus 110 induction range cooker, H109.2xW93x D64.8cm, col Slate, £2,467, Rangemaster.

#### FIND THE PERFECT

#### GRANITE WORKTOP





1 Black Pearl, from £374 sq m; 2 Silver Pearl, from £326 sq m; 3 Star Galaxy, from £422 sq m, all Diapol.





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Owners Gloria Stewart, who is a garden designer and dealer in French decorative artefacts and textiles, and her musician husband, Eric. They moved here in 2013 with Truffle, their Fox Terrier/Jack Russell cross.

*House* A four-bedroom Grade II\*-listed farmhouse dating from around 1560.

Wind goodbye to France after nearly 30 years of living there was a big decision for Gloria and Eric Stewart. In its favour, several generations of the family live in Kent, as had the couple themselves before going to France. 'Returning felt like coming home,' says Gloria. What was more surprising for this couple, who'd done major house restorations in south-west France, was deciding to look for a period house that needed no restoration. Getting themselves and their chattels home was a project in itself.

'We loved Kent and its timber-framed buildings and were drawn to this 16th-century house because of its authentic atmosphere,' says Gloria. 'After living in high-ceilinged 18th-century French properties, it was the English quality of this house that appealed as well.' Sensitively restored, it has off-white limewashed walls and multiple beams.

'The beams aren't too low and the windows with deep sills balance the wood's visual weight with a welcome lightness,' says Gloria. The house has two large rooms on the ground floor, each with a big fireplace, but to top it all the beams are native wood that had been left untouched. In centuries past, the area had been known for its forests.

With her background in design, albeit garden, and an unerring eye for finding gorgeous decorative artefacts and textiles, Gloria knows just which furniture will suit a space, which pictures to hang and exactly where to »

Kitchen The unfitted side of this room of two halves gives Gloria scope to show off her beautiful collection of miniature French baskets, along with small ornaments and kitchen utensils.









position lamps and accessories. Integrating typically French furniture, often 18th-century, in this older, more rustic house could have been an issue in less skilled hands.

'I had to sell some pieces, including armoires and a glass-fronted cupboard I particularly liked, because they were too tall,' says Gloria. 'But I have painted 18th- and 19th-century English tables that slot equally well into English and French interiors, and I've always bought sofas in England because it didn't take me long to realise we English understand the need for comfortable seating!'

The proportions of some of the rooms means Gloria has been able to give them a multi-purpose role. The dining room with its generous open fire, for example, has space for a sofa and a fireside chair as well as the dining table. 'It's somewhere to sit by the fire and read in a room where there isn't a television,' she says. The feeling of comfort and nostalgia weaves its way throughout this ancient property. The kitchen illustrates this feel perfectly with its neat little Aga, utensils in a mix of pots and bowls, and a small side table found in a barn in France.

'My grandmother's kitchen looked like this,' says Gloria. 'It was cosy and I remember cakes coming out of a similar range. Part of the joy of coming back has been finding an old timber-framed house. It may sound sentimental, but it's a style of building we know and love.' Main bedroom
An antique floral
Provençal quilt
looks beautiful
with lace-trimmed
pillowcases, the
scalloped edges
of which are echoed
in the early 19thcentury bedside
tables. The hat box
is part of Gloria's
collection.



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**Think ceramic.** Belfast **sink,** H20x W50xD60cm, £299, Neptune. Measure cup **pot,** H14.5cm, £15, Pastel Lane.



Go for rattan seating to remind you of summer. Sophie chair, col Sage, H89xW49xD57cm, £190, Limes & Vines.



Traditional range

An updated range will help you fall in love with cooking all over again.

#### Need to know...

A cast-iron 'heat storage' range cooker is always on, taking the chill off the kitchen in winter. Oil, gas, electric and wood-burning versions are available, sometimes with built-in boilers for hot water or central heating. These cookers need professional installation so should be considered a permanent fixture. If you move to a house that has an Aga already, contact the company about a makeover. It can be converted

from oil-run to a programmable electric version; it can also be given a change of colour or new hob covers.

#### Where to buy...

- **Aga** for new ranges and reconditioning services.
- Esse for wood-burning range cookers.
- La Cornue for ranges with copper and stainless-steel finishes.



**Choose clean design.** Royal Doulton Fable Garland **plate**, 27cm diameter, £9, John Lewis. Monobloc chrome **tap**, £299, Perrin & Rowe at Neptune.

## Be inspired by Gloria's rustic kitchen



Add smart colour with French blue.
Nordal Madame breadbox, col Blue,
H24xW29xD20cm, £40, Amara. Butcher's
stripe double oven glove, £10, Waitrose.



Give kitchen displays a traditional feel.

Dorchester Pine 5ft dresser top,

H101.5xW154xD25cm, £299,

The Cotswold Company.

#### FIND THE PERFECT

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1 Presealed, 30cm sq, £84.89 sq m; 2 Handmade Classic, 40cm sq, £59.95 sq m; 3 Reclaimed, 15x30cm, £109.82 sq m, all Fired Earth.





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#### AT HOME WITH...

Owner Artist Dede Gold, who moved into the house in 2014. House A two-bedroom Cotswold-

stone house dating back to the 1850s that was once used as the town library.

an artist and city dweller, there were only two things that could have persuaded Dede Gold to move from her basement flat in London - space to paint and her own garden. 'I didn't really have any intention of leaving the city until I saw a picture of this house online,' says Dede. 'I rang the estate agent out of curiosity but, when I realised it had potential for a studio in the garden, it was a game changer.'

Located in the centre of a small Oxfordshire town, the house was built in the 1850s and was once used as the public library. It had already been renovated to a high standard by the previous owners who had retained its quirky charm. 'The house was fabulous, with a stunning new kitchen at the back,' says Dede, 'and the outdoor space was large enough for my studio.'

The picturesque market town has a thriving creative scene, which was the icing on the cake for Dede. 'I love the honey and toast coloured Cotswold stone,' she says. 'Historically and culturally, the area has so much going on and it has a real arts vibe and heartbeat to it, as well.'

As the newly renovated property was in a good condition, all Dede needed to do was install the garden studio, carry out some minor redecoration then concentrate on the furnishings and artwork. When it came to making decisions on the decor, Dede used the same principle as she does when composing a painting - she refers to her box of inspiration. 'I've always collected lots of inspirational bits and pieces, such as photos, magazine cuttings, newspaper quotes and textiles,' she says. 'I then >>





make moodboards to help with colour, tone and composition. I often use Pinterest as an online moodboard, and I find it really useful for developing ideas, whether on canvas or concrete.'

Throughout the cottage, antique and vintage painted furniture sits alongside contemporary pieces in most rooms. 'I've also used some special fabrics that I had my eye on for a long time,' she says. 'I have mixed these with Pierre Frey staples, Andrew Martin textiles and linens from Irish company Lucan Fabrics.' A peaceful palette of greys flow through house with subtle changes and splashes of colour as highlights.

Travelling in the United States has influenced Dede's interiordesign style. 'I like the industrial chic of charcoal greys, zinc and other metals, and have introduced a few token pieces around the house,' says Dede. 'I loved being in New York and Long Island and have brought back some great treasures from there.'

As the artist-in-residence, Dede's paintings adorn most rooms in her home. Handsome canine characters look down from gilded wooden frames, creating an interesting talking point for friends and family. Originally from Ireland, Dede decided on a lifechanging career in her mid-thirties having trained as a solicitor. 'I wouldn't say the creative path is an easy one, but it's hugely rewarding when it works,' she says. 'At the moment, I'm working on two exhibitions, one in London and another in the US.'

Now complete, Dede's home has a light, sophisticated interior brought to life by her characterful paintings and carefully chosen furniture and accessories. 'This is my nest and my creative hub,' she says. 'It's just a lovely place to be.'



Stairs A chunky hemp rope makes an attractive banister rail. Carpet, Crucial Trading. Frames, Paddy Gunnery.





Add a touch of luxury. Faux Shagreen trunk, H38xW77xD46cm, £650, Oka. Lavinia lamp, H46cm, £55, John Lewis.



**Team grey with crisp white.** Fringe **throw,** 225x140cm, £110, The Linen Works. Faux **orchid** in stone pot, H61cm, £49.50, Amara.



#### Café shutters

For a window treatment that offers clean lines and privacy during the day as well as after dark, these are ideal.

#### Need to know...

This style of shutter maximises daylight, with slats easily adjusted using a rod or simply finger pressure, and panels that fold back to reveal the entire window. They can be hinged in sections to open concertina-style. As well as elegant wood and painted shutters, there are fabric, faux suede and leather-covered versions. For bathrooms, consider easy-clean waterproof acrylic and vinyl shutters. When choosing the slat width, bear in mind the position of window catches.

#### Where to buy...

- Hillarys for timber and painted styles.
  Luxaflex for vinyl shutters.
- The New England Shutter Company for faux suede and faux leather shutters.



**Pick up on pastels.** Montacute **fabric,** £66 m, Nina Campbell at Osborne & Little. Velvet **cushion,** 50cm sq, £40, The French Bedroom Company.

## Be inspired by Dede's living room

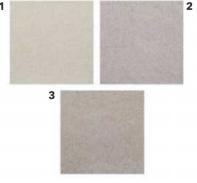


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#### FIND THE PERFECT

GREY CARPET



1 Lyme Cove; 2 Teign Grey; 3 French Grey, all £41 sq m, Devonia Plain collection, Axminster Carpets.

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## All the details:

## PRODUCTS AND PRICES





UTILITY CHIC MOODBOARD (Clockwise from top left) Label frame, £2, Willow & Stone. Hessian, £8 for 2m; jute, £3 for 2m, Hobbycraft. Jug, £20, Sparrow and Co. Fabrics, Organic Ticking, £29.50 m; Stirling, £59.50 m, both lan Mankin. i-Flower, £75 m; Gabriel Stripe, col Blue, £35 m, lan Sanderson. Denim, £34.50 m, lan Mankin. Plate, £4.50, Labour and Wait. Paint, Ludgate Circus, £58 for 2.5L, Mylands. Joanna; Pale Wedgwood, both £53 for 2.5L, Little Greene. Pigment, from a selection, Earthborn. Mug, £14, Sparrow and Co. Acapulco Salazar tile, £3.25, Fired Earth. String, £6.50 for 200g, Labour and Wait. MAIN (On worktop) Teapot, £65; jug, £55; bowls, £20 each, all Sparrow and Co. Ladles, £48 for 3; plate, £4.50; tea towel, £14, all Labour and Wait. Pan holder, Denim, £34.50 m, lan Mankin. Bread board, £38, Rowen & Wren. Mug, £14,

Sparrow and Co. Platter, £35, Unique & Unity. Board, £44.95, Nkuku. Small board, £20, Sparrow and Co. Vase, £17.50, Cox & Cox. String, as before. Twine, £3.50 for 130m, Hen & Hammock. Shelf, £24, Willow & Stone. Pot, £20, Sparrow and Co. String, £6.50 for 200g; mug, £9.50; enamel mugs, £7 each, all Labour and Wait. Cutlery, from £26 for 6 pieces, Re. Pan holder, as before. Ladle, as before. Bobbin, £11, Hen & Hammock. Blind, Gabriel Stripe, £35 m; i-Flower, £75 m, both lan Sanderson. Pot, £7.50 for 3, Cox & Cox. Bag, £14, Rowen & Wren. Stool, £65, John Lewis. Cushion; curtain, as blind. (On shelf) Enamelware, from a selection, Labour and Wait. Boxes, £5 each, Ikea. Painted in Ludgate Circus, as before. Sacks, £4 for 2, Hen & Hammock. Runner, £179, Roger Oates. Basket, £18, Rowen & Wren. Other items, stylist's own.

Pages 68-69



GYPSY FLORALS MOODBOARD (Clockwise from top right) Buttons; cord, similar from Hobbycraft. Wallpaper, Ariadne's Dream; Zinnias, both £149 a roll; Red Tulips linen, £39 m, Kim Parker Artbook at Clarke & Clarke. Fabrics (in hoop) Fontana, col Pink/Green, £95 m, Jane Churchill at Colefax and Fowler. Devon, £85 m, Bluebellgray. Paint, A Dip in the Lake; Festival Orange, both £35.50 for 2.5L, Fired Earth. Other items, stylist's own. MAIN Ariadne's Dream wallpaper, as before. Chair, from £355, Ercol. Ardnish cushion, £70, Bluebellgray. Book, £25, Anthropologie. Desk, £219, Scumble Goosie. Painted in Duck Egg Blue, £18.95 for 1L, Annie Sloan. (On desk) Penelope lamp, £45, John Lewis. Jug, from £10; floral notebooks, from £7.50 each, all Collier Campbell. Linen

journals, £4.12 each, Nkuku. Telephone, col English Mustard, £49.95, Wild & Wolf. Sissinghurst Castle bowl, £14, Anthropologie. (On shelf) Embroidery hoop, from £2, Hobbycraft. Fabric, Fontana, £95 m, Jane Churchill at Colefax and Fowler. Pot, £4.75, Willow & Stone. Sissinghurst side plate, £14, Anthropologie. Embroidery hoop; fabric, as before. Notecards, £8 for 10, Collier Campbell. Rifle Paper Co Floral Heart card, £3.75; Rifle Paper Co calendar, £24.50, both Willow & Stone. Market basket, £20, Labour and Wait. (In basket) Cushion, £70, Bluebellgray. Sisal Boucle Small Accents Limestone runner, trimmed with C20 Cotton Herringbone, col French Navy, £577, Crucial Trading. Other items, stylist's own.

Pages 70-71



ORGANIC GEOMETRICS MOODBOARD (Clockwise from top left) Wallpaper, Layla Faye Dotty Flower; Layla Faye Daisy Chain Small in Yellow Mellow, both £48.50 a roll, wallpaperdirect.com. Fabrics, Launay, col Pistachio, £50 m, Romo. Maroc, col Yellow, £96 m, Rapture & Wright. Herringbone, col Citrine, £52 m, Sarah Hardaker. Oxney, col Saffron; Camber, col Saffron; Oxney, col Ash, all £75 m, Lindsay Alker. Helice plate, from £15, Jersey Pottery. Wood spoon, similar from Butlers Emporium. Fabric, Maroc, col Yellow, £96 m, Rapture & Wright. Tea towel, £11.29; Lulu & Luca. MAIN Arundel dining table, from £1,350; bench, from £550, both Neptune. Tablecloth, Maroc, col Yellow, £96 m, Rapture & Wright. (On table) Orla Kiely tealight

lanterns, £11.95 each; Orla Kiely Olive plant pots, £27.95 each, all Wild & Wolf. Native bowl, £50, Sparrow and Co. Glass and leather vases, from £15.50, Cox & Cox. Orla Kiely melamine bowl, £21.50, John Lewis. Helice plates, from £15 each; bowls, from £15 each; mug, from £15, all Jersey Pottery. Napkins, Launay, col Pistachio, £50 m, Romo. Napkin rings, Maroc, col Yellow, £96 m, Rapture & Wright. Tea towel, £11, Lulu & Luca. Chair, from £355, Ercol. Cushion, £50, Lulu & Luca. Bench cushions, Camber, col Saffron; Oxney, col Saffron, both £75 m, Lindsay Alker. Piping, Launay, £50 m, Romo. Crate, £60 for 3, Graham and Green. Flower Waves pendant shade, £55, Layla Faye. Ginkgo Yellow Moss print, £45, Bold & Noble. Mossebo oak-effect frame, £14, lkea.

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SUBTLE INDIENNES MOODBOARD (Clockwise from top right) Small Shalini wallpaper (background), £52 a roll, Susie Watson Designs. Fabrics, Angelique, col Charcoal; Florence; Camille, col Light Pink, all £62 m, Kate Forman. Buttons, similar from Hobbycraft. Bowl, £16.95, Nkuku. Fabrics, Angelique, col Pink, £62 m, Kate Forman. Langden, col Porcelain, £15.99 m, Prestigious Textiles. Printing blocks, from £4.50 each, Pilgrims Fair Trade. Scissors, £12.95, Hen & Hammock. Paint, Pearl Ashes, £35.50 for 2.5L, Fired Earth. Lily Lily Rose, £35 for 2.5L, Earthborn. Pearl Colour, £37 for 2.5L, Little Greene. Fabric, Agnes, col Charcoal, £62 m, Kate Forman. Bird, £9.50 for 2, Cox & Cox. Other items, stylist's own. MAIN Walls, Pearl Colour, £37 for 2.5L, Little Greene. Curtain,

Camille, col Charcoal (top), £62 m, Kate Forman; Langden, col Porcelain (below), £15.99 m, Prestigious Textiles. **Pendant**, £99, Willow & Stone. **Day bed** with bolster, £2,585, Another Country. Seat, Angelique, £62 m, Kate Forman. **Cushions** (from back left): **1** Old Paisley, £47.50; **2** Maya Paisley, col Fuchsia, £39.50, both Bohzaar. **3** Florence, £62 m, Kate Forman. **4** Langden, as before. **5** Shalini Linen, £45, Susie Watson Designs. **6** Kanti, col Fuchsia, £39.50, Bohzaar. **7** Malathi, £48, Susie Watson Designs. Harmony **quilt**, £84.99, Bohzaar. **Stool**, £79, Rose & Grey. **Vase**, £18.50; faux **blossom**, £55 for 3 branches; **bird**, £9.50 for 2, all Cox & Cox. **Pot**, £11; **basket**, £18, both Rowen & Wren. **Rug**, similar from Twentytwentyone. Other items, stylist's own.

Pages 74-75



**NEXT MONTH**THE NEW PASTELS

ARTISAN NEUTRALS MOODBOARD (Clockwise from top left) Florence wallpaper (background), £59 a roll; Colette fabric, £79 m, both Harlequin. Paint, French Grey; Linen Wash, both £37 for 2.5L, Little Greene. Vintage buttons, similar from Butlers Emporium. Fabrics, Ebury Natural, £110 m, James Hare. Bobbin Ivory, £50.99 m, Prestigious Textiles. Perot, col Stone, £79 m, GP&J Baker. Denbury Linen, £75 m, Baker Lifestyle. Buttons, similar from Hobbycraft. Lace, £5.95 for 3m, Wild & Wolf. Frame, £22.45, Nkuku. (Inside) Ammi wallpaper, £44 a roll, Harlequin. Alarm clock, £45, Cox & Cox. MAIN Florence wallpaper, £56 a roll, Harlequin. Sienna bed, £1,249; Sienna bedside table, £299, both Feather & Black. Cushions (from back): 1 Ebury Natural, 31569/01, £110 m, James Hare. 2 Perot, col Stone, £79 m,

GP&J Baker. **3** Bobbin Ivory, £50.99, Prestigious Textiles. **4** Velvet and Linen Blush, £20, Cox & Cox. **5** Naomi, £39, Christy. **6** Ebury Natural, 31569/01, £110 m, James Hare. Chantilly Cream Oxford **pillowcases**, £25 for 2; Chantilly Cream **duvet cover**, from £109, all Christy. Shetland Variegated Herringbone **throw**, col Grey, £75, Bronte By Moon. **Bedcover**, Colette, 131566, £79 m, Harlequin. (On table) Metal **lamp**, £39.99, Homesense. Fluted milk **jug**, £24.95 Graham and Green. Faux **blossom**, £55 for 3 branches; copper **alarm clock**, £45, both Cox & Cox. Ukara wood **frame**, £22.45, Nkuku. Delicate hanging photograph **frames** with velvet ribbon hangers, £25 for 3 in same finish, Cox & Cox. Vintage **bench**, from a selection, The Old Cinema. Other items, stylist's own.







- 1 Time for tea. Personalised jar, from £45, The Oak and Rope Company.
  2 One spoon or two? Sugar canister, £28 for 3 (also Tea and Coffee), Garden Trading.
  3 Get organised. Zinc wire basket, £31.95 for 4, Dee Puddy.

- for 4, Dee Puddy.

  4 Have a lovely tea towel close to hand. Red stripe linen tea towel, £18, Beyond France.

  5 Keep tabs on your stores. Metal letter tabs, 95p each, Dee Puddy.

  6 Hide treats in retro storage tins. Metal urn
- tin, £24 for 3, Rockett St George.

  7 Go for the personal touch. Personalised Love Hearts Kilner jar, £22.95, Letteroom at Not on the High Street.
- 8 Relish anyone? Enamel spoon, £44 (with fork, knife and teaspoon), Dee Puddy.
  9, 10, 11 Store in style. Chamba jar, £29.95 (with lid), Nkuku. Nordic canister, £28 for 2, Dibor. Ceramic jar, from £37, Sophie Conran.
  12 Label your buys. Gift tag, £3.20 for 20 mixed letters and numbers, Pipii.
  13 Take to the table in a handy basket.

- 15 Choose quirky table linens. Radish napkin, £5, Re.
  16 Store aromatics. Glass bottle with aluminium lid, £10, Ella's Kitchen Company.

- 17 Pop your bakes into an airtight container. Textured canister, £19, West Elm 18 Fill jars of all shapes and sizes. Patent

- Ild jar, £3, Irger.

  19 Keep food fresh. Aluminium tin, £9.50, Re.

  20 Get a handy scoop. Cream & Country scoop, £5.99, T&G Woodware.

  21 Be bake-off ready! Porcelain flour labels, £12.95 for 3 (also Self raising), Dee Puddy.

  22 Label with love. Blackboard tag, £2.95,
- 23 Rack up the spices. Wire spice rack with herb jars, £30, Pastel Lane.
  24 Bon appétit! Linen, £18 m (44cm wide),



## Keep dairy produce cool and fresh

- 1 Stack sacks of wholegrains. Red stripe grain sack, £50, Beyond France.
  2 Cover your cheese. Billingham cheese dome, £65, Daylesford.
  3 Create a pretty display of eggs.
  Provence basket, £9.99, T&G Woodware.
  4 Keep clothes flour-free! Oxford Stripe Peony apron, £27.50, Ian Mankin.
- 5 Collect cute motifs. Farmhouse Hen cheese box, £19, Dibor.
  6 Nibble cheese and crackers. Cheese
- 7 Make pastry from scratch. Handpainted Crowned Leaf rolling pin, £18, Molly Hatch at Anthropologie.

  8, 9 Store milk in a retro holder. School milk bottle holder, £5.95; traditional school milk bottles, £2.95 each, Dotcomgiftshop.

  10 Chop and serve. Raw Wood chopping board, £34, West Elm.

  11 Keep butter cool. Enamel butter dish with wooden lid, £15, Garden Trading.

  12 Tie up loose ends. Baker's twine, £3.20 for 4m on sheep bobbin, Clouds & Currents.

- 13 Tuck in! Enamel cutlery, £44 for 4 pieces (also spoon), Dee Puddy.
  14 Store eggs ready for scrambled, poached or fried. Wire egg basket, £18.95,
- **15 You're a good egg!** Slate egg tray, £12,
- 16 Pour from the perfect pitcher. Camille
- jug, £20, The Country Cottage Shop.

  17 Sit them in style. Egg rack, from £45,
  The Oak and Rope Company.







- 1 Transport glassware safely. Baroque bottle crate, £16.99, T&G Woodware.
  2 Preserve pickles. Jars, £10.99 for 4, Lakeland.
  3 Seal the deal with a pretty lid. Kitchen jar, £21 for 4, Dibor.

- 4 Add pretty linens. Natural/red gingham kitchen towel, £12.99 for 2, Linen Me.
  5 Weigh your home-grown veg. Market scales, £4, Garden Trading.
  6 Go for a jolly storage sack. Brighton Check Peony sack, £65, Ian Mankin.
- 7 Fresh from the farmer's market. Desna vintage storage basket, £54.95 for 2, Dassie. 8 Treat yourself to a bespoke shopper. Personalised vegetable sack, £14, Andrea Fay's at Not on the High Street. 9 Store in style. Decorated produce tray, £14.95, Dotcomgiftshop.
- 10 Monogram bottle labels. Antique brass alphabet stencil set, £28, Home Barn.
  11 Mix a favourite tipple. The Homemade Gin Kit, £39.99, Rockett St George.

- 12 Claim your drink! Slate tag, £1.50, The Wedding of My Dreams.
  13, 14 Uncap and uncork. Vintage bottle openers, £3.50 each; corkscrew, £15, Re.
  15, 16 Collect crates. Vintage crates, from £32; fish crate, £12.50, Susie Watson Designs.
  17, 18, 19 Get bottling! Square clip-top bottle, £3.99, Kilner. Presentation bottle, £3.48; cordial bottle, £3.95, both Lakeland.
  20 Carry to the dinner table. Wire storage basket, £24, Laura Ashley.

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# The country decorator ARTY WALLS DISCOVER THE NEW WAY TO CREATE ARRESTING VISUAL DRAMA WITH LARGE SCALE WALLPAPER PANELS, MURALS AND PHOTOGRAPHY If your walls are not suitable could partially conceal exposed bring a vibrant sense of the Printed wallpaper hanging, £400, Surface View. housetohome.co.uk/countryhomesandinteriors





## OBARE PLASTER

Stripping a wall could reveal a palette of colours that are a fitting backdrop to a relaxed country look. Layers of paint can be peeled back to expose the chalky plaster underneath with its natural pigments and exquisite hues. If you're lucky, these can resemble a creative paint effect reminiscent of sunsets and skylines – perfect for a hallway. Metal console table, £180, Cox & Cox.

## Q WOODLAND BACKDROP

If your room has period architectural details, try a contemporary take on a fresco-style mural to complement the classic interior. A bespoke design depicting a lush pastoral landscape with tall trees is ideal for rooms with lofty ceilings. Use on one wall for added impact and select a design that can be printed to fit the space, such as Trees One wallpaper fresco, \$85 sq m, An Angel at My Table.

### 4 BEAUTIFUL BORDER

For a traditional feel, add interest to walls with an intricate design. In historic properties with bumpy walls or uneven ceilings, go for patterns with movement such as large swirls, rather than stripes or geometrics. Magdalen Jebb, Creative Director, Lewis & Wood, suggests Bacchus, inspired by an Elizabethan wall painting, £56.40 m for an extra wide (138cm) width, including borders. »









## ∠ MODERN RUSTIC

A photographic, leafy woodland scene packs a visual punch in a country hallway, utility or boot room, and looks great with stripped wooden floors and doors and a rug with pops of green to hint at the forest floor. Look for images with a sunny feel and zesty hues for an uplifting effect when you're on your way in or out of the house. Try Surface View for similar photographic murals by Nic Miller.

### SOFTLY SUBTLE

For a contemporary country home, use a mural with a delicate shadowy suggestion of trees to complement a clean aesthetic and provide a link with the landscape. Hanna Wendelbo-Hansson, Designer and Creative Director, Sandberg, says, 'Sandberg's Skog wallpaper is perfect for a hallway, adding both personality and interest. The soothing green tones make you feel welcome and calm as soon as you open the door.' Skog wallpaper mural, 360x270cm, £252.

#### ☐ PAINTERLY EFFECTS

Transform a bedroom with a moody cloud scene for a romantic backdrop. The look works well in a dark space as the lack of daylight only adds to the ambience. For the most convincing effect, apply to a wall just high enough for the pattern to cover the entire space. Clouded Wall Mural Sky Scene, around 254x244cm, from £203.66, Anewalldecor at Etsy.



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### Succulent terrariums

Add a layer of grit or pebbles to the base of your chosen glass vessel for drainage. Sprinkle with a layer of activated charcoal – this will keep the soil fresh – then cover with specialist potting soil for growing succulents (find activated charcoal and potting soil in garden centres). Plant the largest succulent first, then work the other smaller ones around it. Finish with a decorative top layer of pebbles, shells or moss. We also added bleached cones – make these by soaking cones in a 1:2 parts bleach to water mix overnight. Water succulents sparingly, allowing the soil to dry out in between, especially if growing in a cloche or enclosed glass vessel.



Tabby Cottage **planter**, £44.99, The Chelsea Gardener. Pacific **terrarium**, £69.95 (assembled), The Urban Botanist. Bonbon **jar**, £62 (with lid); Rabbit **cake stand**, £30, Out There Interiors. **Candle**, £18, Sophie Conran. **Vase**, £7, Ikea. **Plants** from The Chelsea Gardener The Urban Botanist and Rocket Gardens. Other items, stylist's own.

## Viola, ivy and rose birdcage

Birdcage-style planters are easy to find in shops but can look very modern. To give them a vintage feel with a paint treatment, first make sure the surface is clean, dry and free from dust, then, following manufacturer's instructions, spray with a light coat of grey and matt white paint. Once dry, place pots of mini roses, violas and ivy inside – we've covered the pots with decorative covers made from hessian and ribbons that are attached with double-sided tape. Make pretty paper labels using a paper punch, then tape to wooden skewers and pop into place in the pots. Finally, add a garland made using a heart paper punch and twine or wreath wire.



Birdcage planter; wreath wire; ribbon, from a selection, D Byford & Sons; planter painted in Metallic Spray Paint in Pewter, £8.83 for 400ml, and Colour Twist & Spray in Antique White Matt, £7.49 for 400ml, PlastiKote. Decorative paper, £15 for 48 sheets; punches, from a selection; hessian, £8 for 2m, Hobbycraft.

## Herb teapots and mugs

Plant up kitchen garden herbs in enamelware mugs, teapots and jugs, adding teabag-style name tags for the plants. To make the tags, simply cut a square of patterned card and fold in half. Pierce through the middle of the fold and thread a length of string though, leaving a small amount behind. Write the herb name on a smaller piece of card then staple the whole thing together to complete the tag. Attach the end of the string to the inside of the planter with sticky tape and place the plant pot inside. Finish with a layer of pebbles, if desired. The herbs can be potted up directly inside the vessel itself – just remember to add a layer of grit at the bottom to help with drainage.



Herbs, £5.99 for 3, Rocket Gardens. Vintage blue teapot, similar from Ebay. Mugs, £6 each, Baker & Bell. Grey teapot, £26.50, Garden Trading. Cream jug and teapot, similar from Ebay. Basin, £16; apron (folded), £32.95, Sophie Conran. Decorative paper, £15 for 48 sheets, Hobbycraft. Trug, similar from Wyevale Garden Centres. Fabric remnants, stylist's own.

## Winter bloom chest

Create a pretty spring display by planting up faux flowers in a vintage-style wooden chest. To give the chest a distressed paint finish, lightly sand with low-grade sandpaper then wipe over and allow to dry. Paint the chest with a couple of coats of white Chalk Paint, sanding back and wiping away the dust between each coat and allowing to dry completely at each stage. Finish with a layer of clear varnish to seal the paint before leaving to dry overnight. Place the pots of faux plants inside the storage chest. Make decorative plant markers by stamping pre-cut labels with alphabet letters, then tie the labels to a knotted cocktail stick with string and place in each pot.



Chest, similar from Ebay; painted in Chalk Paint, col Pure, £18.95 for 1L, Annie Sloan. Tags, £1 for 25; stamps, £10 for 64, Hobbycraft. Faux potted snowdrop, £8.99; faux potted cyclamens, £7.50 each, The Secret Garden. Gardener's notebook, £5.95; watering can, £14.95, Sophie Conran. Jelly mould (as planter), similar from Ebay.

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## 'I LOVE TO SEE THE LANDSCAPE WAKING UP FOR SPRING'

## Online retailer Claire Coldwell

ntil three years ago Claire Coldwell was a production executive for the BBC in Manchester with a three-hour daily commute across the Pennines. Life was hectic for this mum of two, so a change of pace was needed. In spring 2014, she set up her online business selling traditional homeware products that are both beautiful and useful to make everyday chores more enjoyable. Her range includes kitchen utensils, cleaning brushes, garden products and laundry care items. In October last year, Plain Useful was the well-deserved Retail winner in the Country Homes & Interiors My Country Business Awards. We headed to Yorkshire to catch up with Claire...

TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVE... It's a stone-built 18th-century farmhouse in the Pennines on the edge of the Peak District, overlooking Holmfirth. You couldn't ask for a more perfect spot. We think there's been a house here since medieval times and a settlement as early as 1274. I live here with my husband, Anthony, our children, Bea, 13, and James, nine, and Collies Holly and Swift. We have some land with the house and are lucky that it provides us with firewood. Surrounding the house is

a mature garden and fields as far as the eye can see. We have space for a greenhouse and are planning a vegetable garden as our next project. I'm a keen gardener, as you can tell.

IS THIS YOUR DREAM HOME? It is! I've always liked the relaxed farmhouse look and love having a big kitchen with an Aga. When my grandmother died she left me some money and I used it to have a kitchen table made. We have a big family and it's great to be able to seat everyone comfortably. I love the fact that it's at the heart of the home - I think she would have been pleased.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR MEMORIES OF GROWING UP IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

My parents regularly took us on camping holidays. The fresh smell of a new dawn and running off to play in the dew while breakfast was cooking felt very liberating. Childhood stories come alive when you play outside.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU MOST ABOUT LIVING IN THE COUNTRY? I spent over 20 years working in an air-conditioned, artificially lit office where I was hardly aware of the seasons changing. Now I feel absolutely a part of not just every season but also of >>

















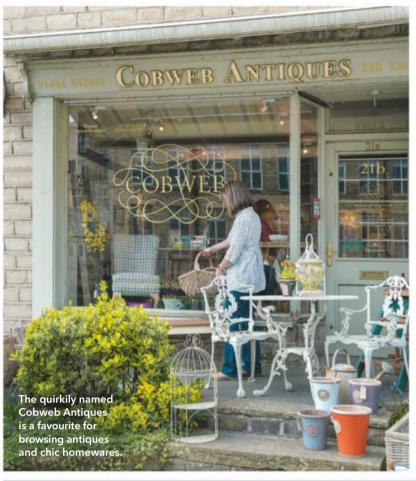








### MY KIND OF COUNTRY

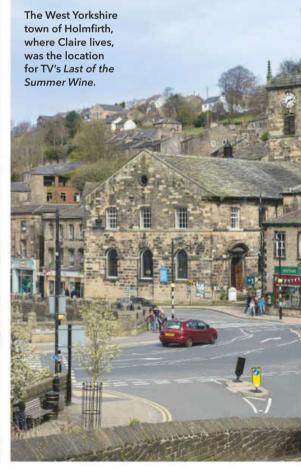




I couldn't live without ... 'MY AGA, MY KITCHEN TABLE, WELLIES, AND ONLINE SHOPPING'













the landscape. We're high up so you see the weather fronts roll in. In the country you get 'proper' seasons – snowy winters, warm spring sunshine and crisp autumn days with blue wood smoke wisping from the chimneys. Each season is beautiful in a different way.

WHICH DESIGNERS ARE IN YOUR LITTLE BLACK BOOK? I really like the modern country look and love fabrics by Kate Forman, Ian Mankin, Emily Bond and Vanessa Arbuthnott. They all produce high-quality linens, with beautiful soft colours that have a timeless quality. I find simple, functional design very satisfying and David Mellor's The Country Shop in Hathersage is one of my favourite places to browse.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAVOURITE LOCAL SHOPS... We have a number of award-winning food producers in Holmfirth: J Brindon Addy game butchers, Longley Farm (dairy), the Pure North Cider Press, plus The Handmade Bakery in Slaithwaite. This is a not-for-profit, community-supported bakery where local people 'subscribe' to a regular loaf of bread. My favourite homewares shop, also in Slaithwaite, is Cobweb Antiques. Owner Alison Coates stocks the shop with lovingly restored antique furniture alongside contemporary homeware accessories and gift ideas. It's hard to go away empty handed!

HOW DOES YOUR PERFECT WEEKEND **SHAPE UP?** I love having friends to stay. but with all the food prepared in advance so I can relax and enjoy their company. Once the children are in bed on Friday evening, I open a good bottle of red and serve something like a simple lamb tagine. Saturday morning we breakfast on coffee and pastries from The Handmade Bakery. Holmfirth has a lively art, food and film festival scene, so there's always something to do. On Sunday we have a big cooked breakfast, read the papers and go for a walk over the moors with the children and dogs. When our guests have gone and the children are in bed, I like to curl up in front of the fire with my husband to watch a film.

IT'S SUNDAY LUNCHTIME - WHERE DO YOU HEAD? If the weather is fine, we walk across the valley to the Holmfirth

\*

#### CLAIRE'S COUNTRY VIBE

Favourite spring flower? Daffodils

- the palest white narcissi indoors
and sturdier Tête-à-têtes for outside.

Top spring-cleaning tip? Your
equipment should be well made
and look lovely enough to keep out.
I hang my brushes on an antique
ladder – a peg rail works well, too.
The best thing about the Pennines?
It's beautiful countryside, but only an
hour from Leeds and Manchester.

Vineyard. There's a small restaurant and the outside terrace has splendid views of the Peak District National Park.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SEASONAL FOOD? I love rhubarb. Much of the forced variety is grown in the Wakefield Triangle and harvested by candlelight. We love fruit crumbles. I also cook rhubarb with ginger and serve it with Longley's ice cream.

TELL US WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS SPRING... It's lovely to see the green shoots peeking through after the long, cold winter and to welcome the first lambs. We're lucky enough to have seen hares boxing in our field, families of baby rabbits, pheasants and even deer and, of course, all manner of birds building nests.

WHAT ARE YOUR MUST-HAVE ITEMS FOR SPRING CLEANING? Mangle & Wringer's Good For Glass, Turner & Harper's beech dusting brush with hog bristle, a wonderfully shiny dustpan and brush set by Redecker, and also Redecker's range of copper cleaning products.

WHAT ARE THE HOT ISSUES LOCALLY NOW? Town planning is really dividing people. A lot of poor planning decisions have been made in the Holme Valley. Parts of the hillside are being choked up with new houses and, sadly, the green spaces are disappearing. Plain Useful, 01484 680073, plainuseful.com.

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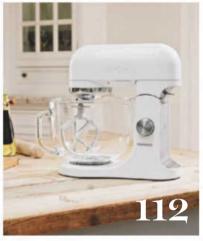


## PROJECTS, PLANS and dreams

ALL THE SOLUTIONS, ADVICE AND INSPIRATION YOU'LL EVER NEED FOR THE PERFECT COUNTRY HOME







Page 102 Modern extensions for period homes

Page 108 Springtime bedlinen

Page 112 The latest kitchen mixers »

## Style-statement ways to extend your living space

NEW, CLEVERLY DESIGNED STRUCTURES CAN BRING AN EXTRA DIMENSION TO RURAL HOMES, SO, WITH GLINTING CONSERVATORIES AND OPEN-PLAN EXTENSIONS SUPPLYING ALL THE LIGHT AND SPACE YOU NEED, WHO NEEDS TO MOVE?





Generous proportions

'The instant we saw this old rectory with its warm red bricks and large sash windows, a classic hardwood orangery was an obvious choice,' says David Salisbury, Managing Director, David Salisbury. 'It has provided a kitchen, adjacent dining room and an area to sit and relax. The

orangery feels like a continuation of the house, with windows that complement the existing ones.'



Bright and beautiful

These owners were keen to create a large open-plan kitchen, dining and living area for their farmhouse. 'A real benefit of a post-and-beam-style oak-frame extension is that it creates stunning double-height glazing at the gable end, flooding the room with natural light, and providing stunning views out to the garden,' says Mark Jones, General Manager, Welsh Oak Frame.

## Country ways

Instead of building a fully glazed conservatory, it's worth considering an orangery or garden room with a solid roof. It will help keep the space snug in winter, while protecting it against overheating during the summer. For an authentic country appearance, this seasoned oak orangery is topped with a lantern and surrounded by tiles in shades of warm terracotta creating a building that can be enjoyed all year round. »



Consider electronically switchable glazing operated by a remote control, a sensor or a timer. It uses an electric current to turn the glass from clear to opaque, or to a variable tinted effect – ideal for controlling the light, glare and heat.







Inchbald graduates came out top at Chelsea Flower Show with four medals.

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Heritage choice

"The family in this house wanted a large multipurpose room that connected to the garden while also sympathetic to the listed property," says Merry Albright, Marketing Manager, Border Oak. "We used a "barn-style" approach, with a green-oak frame, which is ideal for listed buildings as its self-supporting structure means less disturbance to the main building."

Similar oak-frame **extension** kit, from £30,000, Border Oak. >>



## Country best OUTDOOR LIGHTING



#### RETRO STYLE

Add an aged look with this aluminium light.

• Dynamo 1 Light wall bracket, £90, Där Lighting.



#### SLIM SELECTION

Attach a row of these stylish lamps to an extension wall.

• Helix Corteen outdoor wall light, £158, Furnish.co.uk.



### SHIP AHOY

Choose this classic design in weathered or natural brass, or a chrome-plated finish.

• Brass Bulkhead, £185, Davey Lighting.

Glass act Soaring roof lines provide the wow factor, but this design is practical, too, with glazing that counteracts the heat build-up in summer, and underfloor heating for the chillier months. 'For comfort all year round, soft-coat, low-emissivity glass improves insulation and should be the minimum specification,' says Rawden Rogerson, Managing Director, Bartholomew Glass.



Garden views A verandah solves the issue of adding a conservatory to this home, where the garden is at a lower level than the living area. 'This clever design is a lovely example of how to create a harmonious addition to your home,' says Jane Hindmarch, Marketing Manager, Vale Garden Houses. 'The verandah supports match those of the main house and the leadwork on the conservatory glazing echoes the original glazing.'

### Clear solution

'We designed this conservatory to extend the existing kitchen in a Grade II-listed timber-framed property set in a wooded area,' says Andrew Sale, Architect, Trombé. 'Other proposals had been rejected, but due to the transparency of the structure and because it mimics the size and roof form of the existing building, our proposal was seen as not being detrimental to the green belt.'

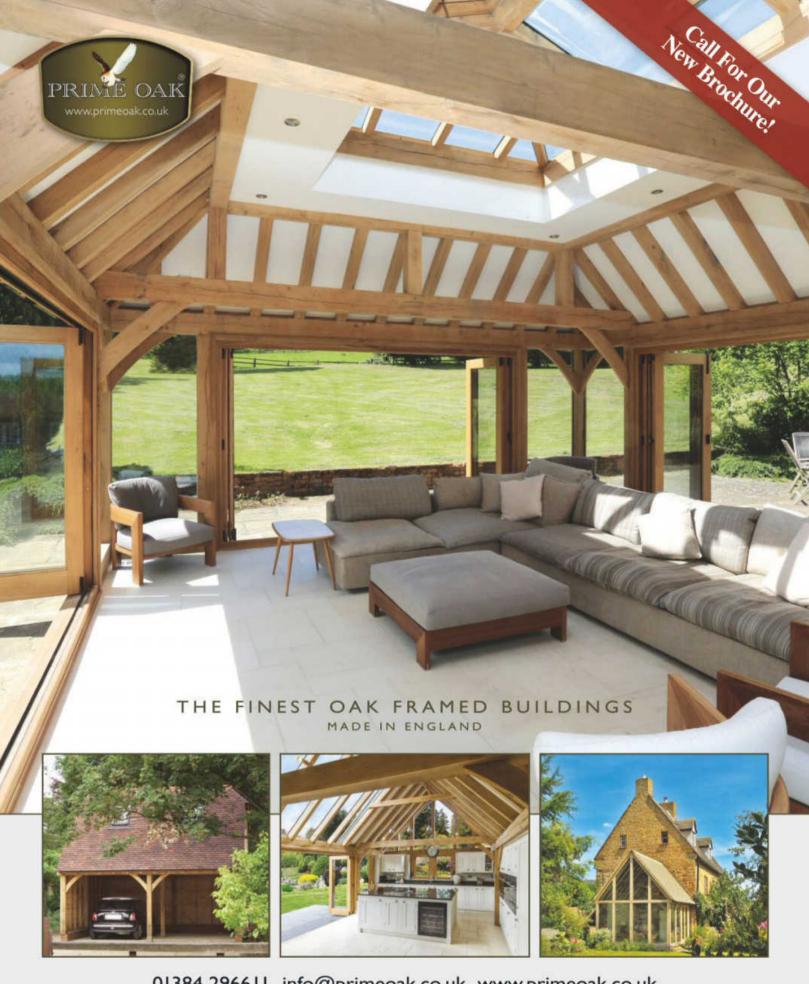


## Country style need-to-know

#### • LOOK AT DIFFERENT GLAZING OPTIONS

Self-cleaning glass breaks down organic dirt so rainwater can wash it away, and acoustically insulating glass will cut external noise. Also consider glazing or window films to protect precious textiles or artwork from harmful UV light. • SEEK PLANNING ADVICE Although some smaller extensions and many conservatories fall under 'permitted development' rules and can be built without planning permission, there are strict regulations regarding size and position and extra restrictions for conservation areas. Visit planningportal.gov.uk for an overview.

• **CONSIDER BLINDS** In a room with lots of glass you might feel exposed. Pinoleum blinds have a pleasing country look, while pleated blinds come in many colours and designs, trapping air in their honeycomb structure for insulation. Find these, plus other options like Venetian blinds and shutters, at a specialist such as Thomas Sanderson.



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## Wake up to bright and beautiful bedlinen

IT'S TIME TO REFRESH AND REVIVE BEDDING. FRESH FLORALS AND LUXURIOUS PLAINS, LAYERED WITH THROWS, QUILTS AND PRETTY CUSHIONS, BRING A NEW LEVEL OF COMFORT TO COUNTRY BEDROOMS





### Feminine florals

Finding bedlinen that works in tandem with country furnishings is key to the design of a relaxing room. Pared-back distressed paint finishes, weathered wood and limed floorboards benefit from the softness of a subtle floral. 'The sharpness of the pink flowers in Osaka contrasts beautifully with a simple rustic setting,' says Lucy Ackroyd, Bedlinen Design Manager, Christy, 'and creates a homely and inviting feel.'



### Soft touch

'The En Fleur collection is printed on cotton sateen with 300 threads an inch,' says Prune Allain des Beauvais, Head of Marketing, Yves Delorme UK. 'A satin weave has more warp threads on the top surface, resulting in a silk-like touch and appealing lustre. The quality of the cotton and the way a sheet feels against the skin is what matters most for a good night's sleep.'

### Bedroom blues

Blue and white lends itself to sophisticated designs. 'We were inspired by Persia and the intricate floral and paisley patterns found on tiles and ancient tapestries, hence the name Kashan, which means land of tiles,' says Julie Hall, Head of Design for the Fable brand from Bedeck. 'Layer the luxurious 300-count cotton percale bedlinen with a throw and embroidered cushion to put together a timeless look.' >>



Tip

\*

For a lovely, fresh smell, add a spritz of scented linen water when ironing linens. We love Mrs White's Linen Spray, £12 for 500ml, Roullier White, which is all natural, made with high-grade essential oils and available in A la Lavande or Flora fragrances.

Spot on flowers Anticipate the longer spring days to come by choosing new bedlinen strewn with blooms. This hand-drawn floral print stands out as a highlight of the new Joules homeware collection. A sprinkling of dots on the reverse of the duvet cover is a fresh touch, while neon trims add a pop of colour to this modern country look.



White and bright Though white is a perennial favourite for bedlinen, it's great to shake things up a little and combine it with a bolder shade. This linen duvet cover set in vibrant Peacock is a real wake-up call. 'Belgian linen is prized for its high quality, breathability and softness,' says Ben Hanley, Assistant Manager for Design, West Elm. 'Ours is prewashed for a luxe, lived-in look.'

### **Brilliant blooms**

'Hydrangeas are favourites of the print team at Cath Kidston,' says Christine Hafsten, Design Director. 'This new print includes delicate, spring-like blossoms in pretty pastels and the larger bunches featured have been designed with plenty of space to breathe, so that they'll contribute to a relaxed layout, perfect for a light, spring look in the bedroom.'



### Country-style need-to-know

- INVEST IN QUALITY Check the thread count, which is the number of warp and weft threads per square inch; in general, 200 or more, used for percale, denotes good quality, and although you'll find counts of 300-400, go for the feel as a lower count can be just as soft.
- KNOW YOUR MATERIALS Yarn with an extra-long staple, such as Egyptian cotton, feels smooth to the touch and soft when handled, as well as being strong and durable. Look out, too, for bedlinen described as Pima cotton, which has similar qualities. The term 'percale' relates to the weave, which is extra tight, resulting in a comfortable, smooth finish.
- MAKE IT SPECIAL Create a truly unique and heirloom look by adding a name, initials, a country motif or even a favourite drawing in machine or hand-embroidery to personalise linens. Decorating a pillowcase with one or two initials in a standard design and colour costs from £16 from The Monogrammed Linen Shop.



# Hardworking mixers for country bakers

KIT OUT YOUR WORKTOP WITH ONE OF THESE HIGH-TECH DESIGNS THAT ARE ALSO EASY ON THE EYE – AND BE READY TO BAKE WHEN THE MOOD TAKES YOU



### BEST FOR... Extra-fast action Sage, 4.7L, 1,000W, £299.95

Designed in association with chef Heston Blumenthal, the Scraper Mixer Pro features a redesigned scraper and planetary motor action that completely wipes the sides and bottom of the bowl every turn, reducing mixing time by up to 60%. Extras include a digital timer.



### BEST FOR... Feeding a crowd KitchenAid, 6L, 500W, £699

The 10-speed Artisan Bowl-Lift stand mixer is built from solid metal and could, if well cared for, provide a lifetime of professional-standard mixing, beating and kneading. The huge glass bowl makes it easier to cook for large numbers and to check ingredients are thoroughly mixed.



### BEST FOR... Retro style Smeg, 4.8L, 800W, £349

Apart from its nostalgic 1950s looks and choice of seven delicious shades, including Pastel Green, this sturdy die-cast aluminium 10-speed mixer has the power and versatility to get the baking done in next to no time. Accessories include a wire whisk, flat beater, dough hook and bowl cover.



BEST FOR... Great value Swan, 4.5L, 1,000W, from £149

The SP21010 comes in seven colours, including Cream, with a stainless-steel bowl, non-stick beater and dough hooks, plus optional vegetable slicer and meat-grinding attachments. Its eight-speed motor offers plenty of power for a busy country kitchen, where its retro shape fits in beautifully.



### BEST FOR... Beyond baking Kenwood, 5L, 500W, from £329

This six-speed model is available in 12 finishes including Striped, Yellow and Gloss White. The six-speed kMix is an update on the classic Kenwood mixer and also powers attachments such as a mincer, pasta cutter and grater. Tools include the K-beater (above), which reaches all areas of the bowl.

# Country style need-to-know

- **STAY IN CONTROL** A wide choice of speeds lets you build up the pace gradually when mixing, to achieve the results you want without spraying food over the walls, which can happen if the setting is too powerful.
- LOOK FOR STABILITY Classic cast-metal mixers weigh upwards of 10kg, and won't budge even when kneading a full bowl of dough. Lighter plastic models that might slip on the worktop need non-slip or suction feet.

### • CHECK OUT ATTACHMENTS

Make sure your mixer comes with at least a mixer blade for everyday tasks, dough hook for bread making and a balloon whisk for batter and meringues. Some models, particularly Kenwood, really earn their place on the worktop by offering a host of optional attachments for blending, slicing/dicing, mincing and grinding, and even a clip-on food processor bowl.



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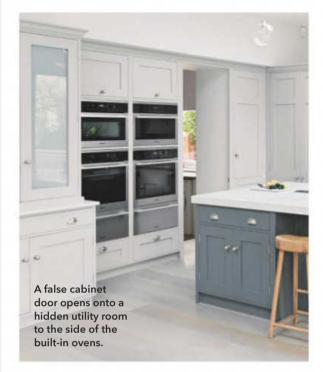
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ow years after moving in to their Edwardian home in rural Kent, Emma and Nick Caplin decided to replace their draughty old conservatory with a modern, light-filled extension. As anything beyond 3m deep needed planning permission anyway, they decided to go all-out with a single-storey room measuring the width of their home and projecting 5m into the garden. 'We wanted a family-friendly kitchen with enough space for a large island and dining area with sofa at the other end,' says Emma. The original kitchen walls would be realigned to create a wider entrance hall, plus a small utility room, and the old dining room would become the playroom, visible from the kitchen through a new doorway.

To design and make the traditional yet modern scheme that the couple had in mind for their kitchen, they spoke to various companies. Eventually they chose Rencraft, whose owner, John Stephens, they had met locally several years before. 'Happily, his proposal for a traditional Shaker design updated with modern materials was just what we had in mind,' says Emma.

The on-trend blue-grey scheme has all the elements of a country house kitchen, such as satin-plated cup handles, exposed hinges and in-frame cabinet doors, but is pared back for a spacious, modern look. 'We tried to make the design look subtle and timeless, but with rustic interest and clever design details to avoid blandness,' says John. 'Simple ideas such as frosted glass fronts on the dresser mean you don't have to keep the contents tidy or display only your prettiest stuff. There's actually a lot going on – it just doesn't feel that way!' >>>

### THE DESIGN SOLUTIONS



### STREAMLINE EXTRACTION

'I have a downdraft extractor in my kitchen and like it a lot,' says John Stephens of Rencraft. 'Extractors above an island hob can obstruct sightlines, play havoc with lighting and, here, would ruin the symmetry of the pendants above. A downdraft was key for Emma and Nick because there's a lantern skylight above their island. Downdrafts are less efficient than ceiling-mounted extractor fans, however, which have natural convection, but good ducting and a strong external motor improve their performance.'

# A 5cm-high Corian upstand links the sink area and worktops to the

glass splashback.

### SEAMLESS SURFACES

'Simple design details boost the kitchen's appeal,' says John. 'The Corian sink moulds seamlessly into the worksurface and makes cleaning a breeze.' Topped with a swan-neck tap in a pewter finish, the sink also has a Quooker boiling water tap, which is great for hot drinks and makes boiling vegetables quick and easy. Other modern appliances that enhance the streamline look include the bank of built-in Miele ovens and warming drawer, an induction hob and integrated dishwasher.

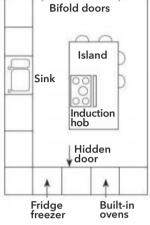


### HARDWORKING HIDDEN STORAGE

While a fresh modern country feel was key, the cupboards needed to conceal flexible storage solutions that would cater for the demands of a busy family kitchen. Clever elements like this deep pan drawer with a hidden slimline internal drawer provide extra storage while keeping the outside of the units streamlined. A hidden utility room, concealed by a larder cabinet door that doesn't interrupt the run of units, is also located next to the built-in ovens. Inside is plenty of space for extra storage and laundry equipment.

# The layout

The kitchen with bifold doors is designed around a large island with an inset hob opposite the sink so that 'traffic' can pass on the other side. The spacious living/dining area (not shown) extends down from the kitchen units, with room for a dining table and sofa. Two skylights usher in more light.



# The details

### **CABINETRY**

Bespoke kitchen cabinets, painted in French Grey by Little Greene and Down Pipe by Farrow & Ball, £25,000, Rencraft.

### SURFACES

Corian composite worktops, col Pearl Grey, from £450 sq m; painted glass splashback, 90x70cm, from £200, both Rencraft Fumed French Rock Grey Rustic oak **flooring,** £100 sq m, David Brown Wood Floors. Walls, painted in French Grey Pale, £37 for 2.5L, Little Greene.

### APPLIANCES

ContourLine oven, £1,499; microwave combination oven, £1.499: **steam oven.** £1.190: and SousChef warming drawer, £1,049; fridge freezer, £1,425; fully integrated dishwasher, £1,250; induction hob, £1,700, all Miele. Lisser 880 downdraft extractor, £1,965, Westin.

### SINK & TAPS

Corian integrated sinks, from £350, Rencraft. Triflow C Spout tap, col Pewter, from £503, Perrin & Rowe.

### FINISHING TOUCHES

Bailey weathered oak bar stools, £135 each, Olive & The Fox. Pick-n-Mix glass pendants, from £295 each, Rothschild & Bickers.

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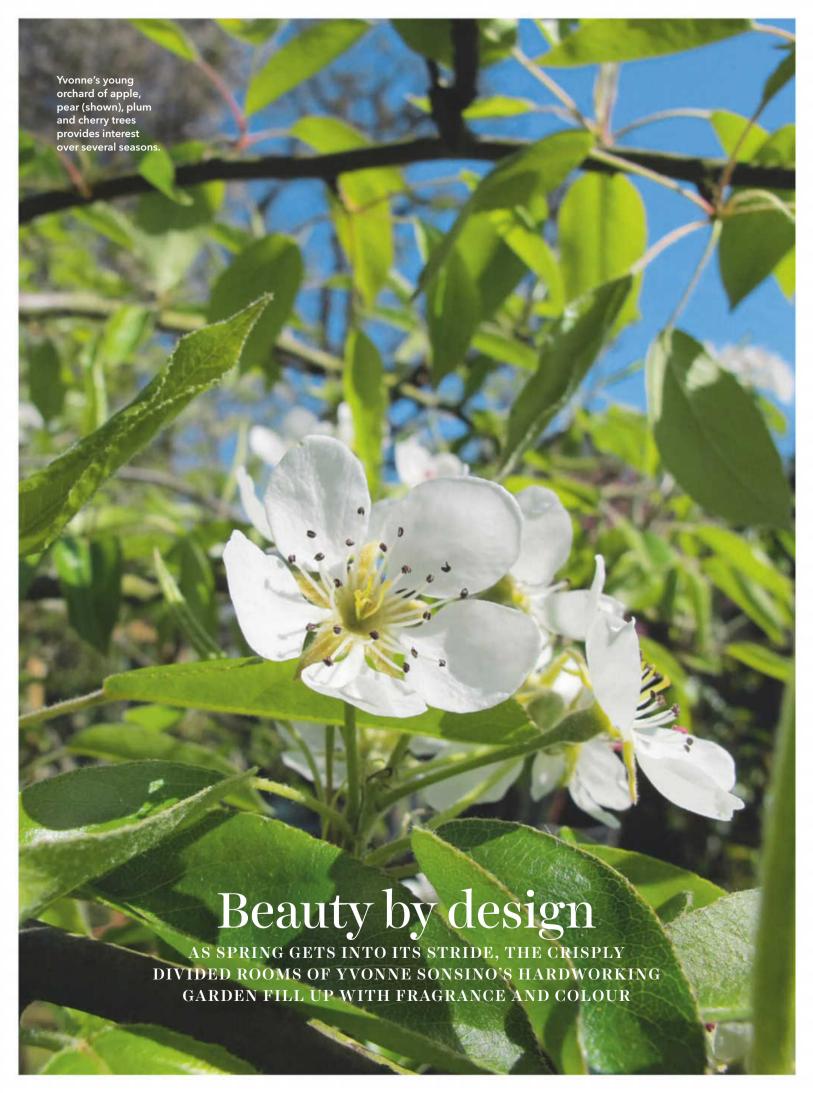
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### AT HOME WITH...

Owners Yvonne and Simon Sonsino, who live here with dogs Milo and Bu. Their grown-up children and grandchildren are frequent visitors.

*House* The edge-of-the-village bungalow was built in the 1960s and has an art studio in the garden.

Garden The house divides the third-of-an-acre garden in two. To the rear there is a productive area and courtyard and to the front a crisply iterated and harmoniously planted pleasure garden.

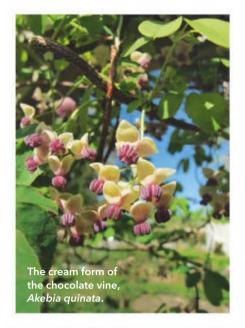
WW Yvonne and Simon Sonsino first came across Canje Grove in the autumn of 2006, the garden was a cross between a lawn and a car park. The site was terminally flat, completely surrounded by high cypress hedges and a wide gravel drive swept over the sunniest part, depositing vehicles in front of the house.

Yet, in this unprepossessing vision, they saw potential. They bought the house, but their plans for the garden's transformation were delayed when Yvonne's work took them to Abu Dhabi for three years. On their return, they made up for lost time and began by removing the looming cypresses and banishing the cars behind a picket fence at the end of the garden nearest the road. A straight path was laid incisively up to the door, with another at right angles. They then worked outwards in a series of rooms and courtyards, creating tunnels of wisteria over the main paths and continuing the pergola theme on either side of the house.

'We did an RHS design course and the tutor said to start with a shape then repeat and repeat. Most people chose curves, but we went for a very square theme,' says Yvonne. 'With the pergolas, I was after the verandah style that I saw when I visited the beautiful gardens in New Zealand – they have such a lovely sense of enclosure and amazing canopies of foliage.'

The house is set well back and the garden is all but invisible from the road. To the front, the garden rooms extend either side of the central axis and a small lawn is punctuated by a young orchard. In the middle of this is a pond, beyond which a shepherd's hut >>

### BERKSHIRE GARDEN

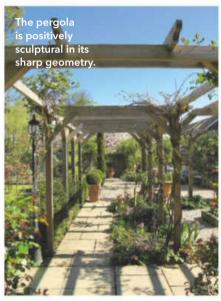






# What makes this garden so special...

'It is packed
with all my
favourite plants the ones with the
loveliest fragrance,
most spectacular
foliage and most
beautiful flowers'











takes the place of a summer house. The area behind the house is divided into dog-friendly gravelled courtyards and raised beds on one side and a veg plot area with rescue chickens on the other.

Cubist confection arranged to her satisfaction, Yvonne moved on to planting. 'From the outset we filled it with quite big plants. I've always been keen on buying mature specimens as you get a quicker result,' says Yvonne. 'Although there are logistical challenges as they are much heavier and you have to dig a much bigger hole, which is not ideal in a garden known for its heavy, sticky clay soil. It's almost like toffee in places and takes a lot of digging.'

The garden is quite shady due to the adjacent woods and Yvonne has married the local conditions and her exacting taste in plants with a willingness to experiment with different themes and styles. 'Under the wood is an area dedicated to rhododendrons and magnolias. I also have hedges made up of daphne, *Amelanchier lamarckii* and pleached *Parrotia persica*. Parrotia is exquisite and the only way I could fit two in was to pleach them!' she says.

Yvonne pays great attention to plant choice and the research process can take up to six months. 'With each plant I aim to get the best and most spectacular of its type – I try not to compromise,' she says, before admitting that a little honing might be required. 'It's fair to say that we initially put too much in!'

Now in its fifth year, the garden has an exquisite sense of proportion and is rich in its different facets and subtleties. Tunnels of foliage create a dappled shade that contrasts well >>

### Modern Country Classic

### Garden rooms

Dividing a garden into different areas allows for plenty of variety and keeps the surprises coming.

Need to know...

- Take a single shape and keep repeating it to create a crisp and coherent design.
- Build in vistas and put a focal point at the end - for example, an interesting plant, a pot or a sculpture.
- Experiment with giving each of your garden rooms a different identity, but remember to maintain a continuity of colour and fragrance throughout for a cohesive look.
- All gardens benefit from the height that separating areas can bring - trees can help a garden blend into its landscape, while pergolas allow for vertical planting.







### ON OUR DOORSTEP...

\*

Walk... 'The Chase (national trust. org.uk) near Woolton Hill - this beautiful woodland with streams and lakes is a favourite place to walk the dogs."

Shop at... 'Penwood Nurseries (01635 254366, penwood nurseries.co.uk). You'll find helpful, skilled staff and a wonderful selection of plants. It is probably my favourite place on the planet!'

Visit... 'Woolton Hill Village Market (wooltonhillvillagemarket. co.uk). This community market takes place on the last Saturday of every month and is packed with local produce, handicrafts and delicious cakes.'

with the acid-bright spring sunshine, while the interesting plants together with pots brought back from the Middle East create a distinct personality. The hard landscaping is strong and sculptural allowing bold shadows to striate the walkways with 'windows' through the design revealing vistas and focal points.

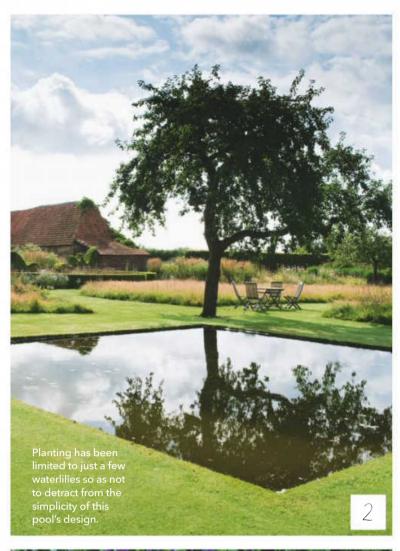
Yvonne is a talented botanical artist with a lifelong fascination for capturing the detail of plants and also has a history of competitive floristry. 'Colour and scent are so important to me. I am a huge fan of the purples and yellows that lie opposite each other on the colour wheel. As a flower arranger, I liked this combination enormously and I have used widely in the garden. I particularly love chocolatey, blackcurranty purple – it is a gorgeous colour that gives such drama. And I adore fragrance, too, because it is not enough just to be visual.'

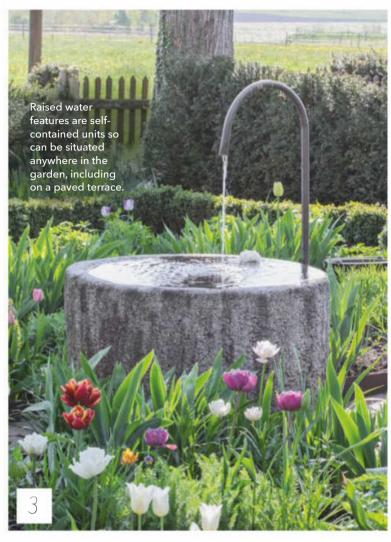
Yvonne enjoys creating combinations and uses floristry techniques when picking colour, form, shape and fragrance. This means that the pots and borders are full of flower arrangements, which she then sits and paints. The garden also offers a balance to her busy career as a management consultant in the financial services sector. 'I am away a lot so I value being at home. I like nothing better than getting out into the greenhouse, sowing seeds and planning for the season ahead. I love this time of year. It is the unfurling leaves and the anticipation - there is so much to get done!'

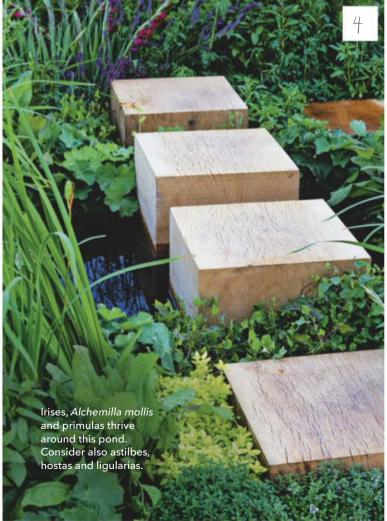
Tanje Grove is open 23-24 April, 2-5pm, as part of the National Gardens Scheme, ngs.org.uk.



# The country gardener POOLS AND PONDS WATER ADDS A NEW DIMENSION TO OUTDOOR SPACES, BRINGING LIGHT, SOUND AND MOVEMENT, AS WELL AS WILDLIFE. PICK A STYLE TO SUIT YOUR PLOT AND MOOD A wooden jetty allows easy access for bathers, but it's also somewhere to sit and enjoy the peace and quiet while trailing your toes in the water. Choose a mix of waterloving plants to attract a wide range of wildlife to your pond. Use special aquatic compost, which is low in nutrients and so helps keep the water clear. SWIM WITH NATURE If going for a dip in your own garden appeals, a natural swimming pond could be the answer. Ideal for a country setting, it will blend perfectly into its surroundings, and there's no need for chemicals as the water is kept clean and free of algae by marginal plants and via a pump through a shingle filter. A wooden jetty makes getting in and out easy. Contact a specialist company for planning advice, design and installation, such as The Swimming Pond Company (pictured, prices from £72,000) or Gartenart Swimming Ponds.







### MIRROR IMAGE

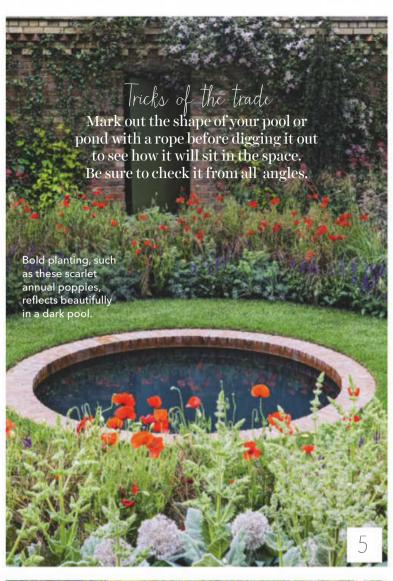
A contemporary square pool set without a border in a neat lawn makes a quietly powerful statement. It creates an area for contemplation, simply reflecting the changing sky and a solitary tree. Despite its stark appearance, this pool fits neatly into a clever grid design of four squares – two adjacent borders filled with soft herbaceous planting and one opposite containing only gently wafting meadow grass.

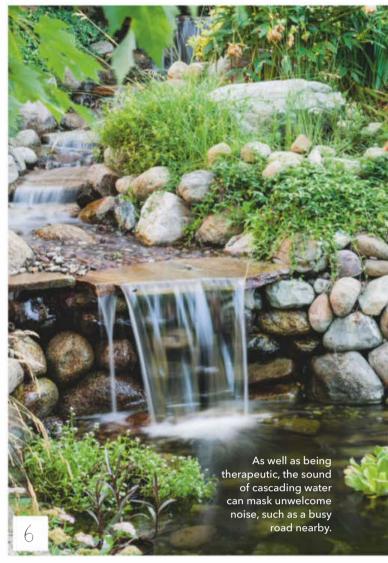
Surrounded by vibrant spring bulbs, this granite water well forms the centrepiece of a box-edged parterre. With an arching spout playing onto its surface, it is both pleasurable to watch and soothing to listen to, while its pared-back design avoids competing with the landscape beyond. Some seating placed nearby

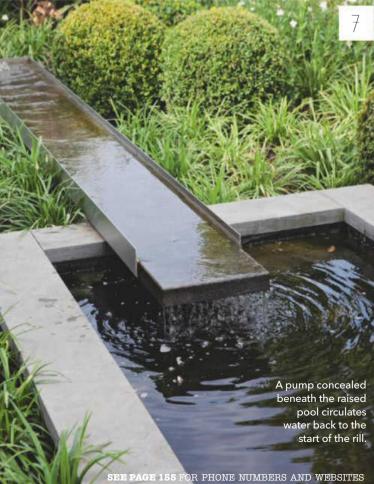
would make this the perfect spot for relaxation.

### 4 STEP THIS WAY

Cubes of solid oak make a striking feature as stepping stones through a small pond dense with plants that are happy with their feet wet. As well as providing a healthy environment for wildlife, the plants soften the hard edges of the cubes. The oak will eventually weather to a soft grey and complement the greens of the foliage.»







### $\subseteq \text{RELAX IN THE ROUND}$

 The beauty of this tranquil circular pool lies in its simplicity. The plain red-brick edging and narrow band of lawn ensure it's the main attraction and provide a pause for breath before the busy mix of plants surrounding it. A perfect reflection is achieved on its still surface thanks to a dark lining or the addition of a special dye, such as Dyofix Pond Black, £20 for 200g.

### FALL FOR A WATERFALL

Nothing looks – or sounds – more natural than babbling water coursing lazily through the garden and splashing into a rock-strewn pond. A waterfall is ideal for sloping sites (although you can build one on level ground) and can be engineered to divert water from a boggy area or stream-fed pond. Use local stone and slate and it will look as though it's always been there.

# 7 MODERN RILLS

/ A rill is a shallow channel of water that suits a formal or contemporary setting. Made from steel, copper, stone or concrete, it can be designed to flow gently into a raised square or rectangular pool. Your eye is naturally drawn along the length of a rill, so position it towards a focal point.

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### **IF YOU ORDER BY POST, SEND YOUR ORDER FORM TO:** Country Homes & Interiors, Clematis 'Winter Beauty' Offer, Dept XCH498, PO Box 162, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3BX

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# Join a country garden share scheme

Short on planting space? Here's a way to meet local landowners willing to share their gardens in exchange for a green-fingered helping hand - and perhaps a fresh carrot or two. Try landshare.net, set up by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, which brings together wouldbe growers with those who have land to spare. This is how it works...

Write a short biog saying who you are and what you're looking for, then post it on the website.

When a landowner gets in touch, chat to decide on timings, space and

planting plans to find an arrangement that suits you both.

### Download and fill in an agreement form

from the site and then get growing! Sharing your produce with the garden owner is a lovely way to say thank you.





# 3 Brighten up a rainy day

Beat spring showers with this floral mac and umbrella. 'Cottage gardens inspired the new collection,' says Elisabeth Lester, Brand Historian, Cath Kidston. 'Small meadow blossoms alongside bold blooms give a modern twist on country style.'



### RECONNECT WITH NATURE

'Put down your devices and connect a little with nature' is the philosophy behind 365 Nature by Anna Carlile (£25, Hardie Grant Books) - a stunning coffee table book that's packed with craft projects, recipes and activities inspired by the great outdoors. Featuring easy-to-follow steps and beautiful photography, chapters are organised by season - try sprouting your own seeds or building a birdhouse this spring!



### PAMPER YOUR POOCH Specially formulated to be gentle on your pet's skin, this revitalising shampoo uses only the purest botanical ingredients to restore shine and ensure a super-soft coat. Argan oil and scented cedarwood oil's natural antiseptic

organic oats soothe and nourish, while deliciously properties help to keep fleas and ticks at bay. Pure Paws Original Organic Dog Shampoo, £12 for 300ml, Pure Light Botanics. >>



### THIS MONTH'S OFFERS FROM

# COUNTRY HOMES & INTERIORS

### **Escorted tours**



### **Lake Como, St Moritz** & the Bernina Express

Take in stunning Lake Como and experience one of Europe's most scenic train journeys through the Alps.

### Selected departures April to October 2016. Price includes:

Return flights, taxes and transfer. \* Seven nights in hand-picked four-star hotels with half-board. \* Sightseeing, including St Moritz, the Bernina Express rail journey and Lake Maggiore. \* Lake cruise to Bellagio and private visit to Villa del Balbianello and its gardens. \* Escorted by an experienced tour manager.



### **Classical Spain:** Seville, Cordoba & Granada

Discover the romance of these historic Spanish treasures.

Selected departures March to November 2016. Price

includes: Return flights, taxes and transfers. \* Six nights in hand-picked three- and four-star hotels with breakfast, staying in Seville, Granada and Mijas. \* Fully escorted tours of Seville, the Alhambra in Granada, plus Cordoba and Ronda. \* Escorted by an experienced tour manager.

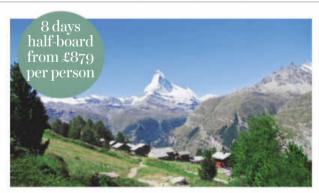


### Lake Garda, Venice & Verona

This tour includes some of the finest locations and cities that northern Italy has to offer.

### Selected departures April to October 2016. Price includes:

Return flights, taxes and transfers. \* Seven nights in hand-picked lake-front hotels with half-board. \* Comprehensive sightseeing of Lake Garda, the Dolomites, Verona and Venice. \* Escorted by an experienced tour manager.



### Lake Maggiore, Lake Orta & the Matterhorn

Enjoy these prize gems of northern Italy and the Swiss Alps.

Selected departures April to October 2016. Price includes:

Return flights, taxes and transfers. \* Seven nights in four-star hotel with half-board. \* Visits to Isola Bella in Lake Maggiore, Lakes Como and Orta, and Zermatt in the Swiss Alps to see the Matterhorn. \* A ride on the Centovalli railway and a lake cruise. \* Experienced tour manager throughout.

### To book or request a brochure, call 01283 523454 or visit cohriviera.co.uk

Additional entrance costs may apply. Prices are per person, from, based on two sharing and subject to finite availability. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Offer operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Riviera Travel Ltd. ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430, a company wholly independent of Country Homes & Interiors, published by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd.



## 5 Clear away the cobwebs

IT'S SPRING-CLEANING TIME! FORGET CHEMICAL-LADEN PRODUCTS - THESE NATURAL SOLUTIONS ARE JUST AS EFFECTIVE...

Wipe surfaces with a naturally scented cleaning spray, complete with anti-bacterial properties. Just combine 100ml water, 20ml orange vinegar and 20 drops of lavender oil.

Rub the glass of picture frames with half an onion before polishing with a dry cloth.

### Shine silver cutlery

by putting each piece in the cooking water of peeled potatoes or rubbing with the pulp of a boiled one.

### **Buff** wooden furniture with believe it or not mayonnaise! It

contains eggs, vinegar and oil - all the ingredients needed to create a

air freshener.

shiny sheen. Fill rooms with a heady scent - add rosemary, lemon and vanilla extract to a pan of boiling water and let it simmer for a natural

Looking for more ideas? Forgotten Ways for Modern Days (£14.99, Kyle Books) by Rachelle Blondel is packed with traditional tips and tricks to help keep your home spick and span from top to toe.



### Buy British THE HEADBOARD WORKSHOP

Euan and Laura Kelway-Bamber established The Headboard Workshop over 30 years ago. As the company's reputation for craftsmanship grew, so did the need for more space; the duo soon swapped London life for the rolling hills of Herefordshire, upping sticks to the scenic Wye Valley. Today, they create a bespoke range of upholstered chairs, beds, valances and ottomans as well as headboards. Customers can choose from beautiful plain and patterned fabrics or supply their own. We love the Caldey headboard (above).

## Feel fresh faced

BRIGHTEN, SOFTEN AND SMOOTH...

- Strengthen your skin's natural defences with this intensive mask containing coldpressed rose seed and peach kernel oils. Wild Rose Smoothing Masque, £16.95
- A natural skin boost scented with Mandarin oil. this organic treat is bursting with vitamins and minerals to give your skin a radiant glow. Vita Min Mask, £16 for 50ml, Green People.
- Rich in thermal spring water, this mask moisturises with extracts of safflower seed and palm kernel. Eau Thermale Avène Soothing Moisture Mask, £11.50 for 50ml, The Garden Pharmacy.



### KNOW YOUR BEES

The 'telling of the bees' is an old English custom, whereby keepers would tap gently on the hive with a front-door key and inform the bees of the latest news. If there was a wedding or christening, a small slice of cake would be left outside for them to enjoy!



# 9 Love seasonal produce

Enjoy a quarterly delivery of products handmade using organic ingredients harvested at Trill Farm, Devon. The Spring Box is packed from a range that includes apple cider vinegar, cordial, herb-infused beauty products and more.

It costs £85. »

Exact contents are a surprise but other spring goodies might include herbal tea, a tea towel, soap, a salve and marigold seeds.





# 10 Enjoy a gournet escape

CALLING ALL FOODIES! TREAT YOURSELF TO A MICHELIN STAR BREAK WHERE TOP-NOTCH EATING IS HIGH ON THE MENU



### THE MANOR HOUSE, WILTSHIRE

### We love it because...

This gorgeous country retreat in parkland near Bath offers Michelinstar dining and a world-class golf course.

### What's the food like?

With produce from the hotel's kitchen garden and meat and poultry from Gloucester Old Spots and Gingernut Ranger chickens and quail reared on the estate, the chef's team is spoilt for inspiration. Original cooking methods capture the flavours of the season, offered on delicious

menus in the hotel's exclusive Bybrook restaurant. Popular options include Manor House Old Spot pork, pickled white cabbage and carrot purée, and pain d'épices ice cream.

### What is the accommodation like?

Country style abounds and golfers can enjoy 18 holes before retiring to sumptuous bedrooms. **How much?** From

How much? From £215 for a double room with breakfast.

The Manor House, 01249 782206, manorhouse.co.uk.





### THE CLUB HOTEL & SPA, JERSEY

### We love it because...

Along with bright spacious bedrooms, a spa and pool, this luxurious island hotel offers lavish dining.

### What's the food like?

The newly refurbished Bohemia restaurant is acclaimed by food critics, especially for its desserts from Michelin-starred head chef Steve Smith. Local seasonal ingredients include Jersey Royal potatoes and scallops, and oysters from Normandy. On the dessert menu look out for Jivara salted caramel.

And the accommodation?
Bedrooms offer all mod



cons, fluffy bathrobes and Elemis bath products.

How much? From £125 a night for a double room with breakfast.

The Club Hotel & Spa, 01534 876500, theclubjersey.com.

# OCKENDEN MANOR HOTEL & SPA, WEST SUSSEX

We love it because... It's an Elizabethan building with country-style rooms and a dining room with views to the South Downs.

### What's the food like?

Sussex-born chef Stephen Crane has held a Michelin star here for 13 years. Sourcing from local producers, he creates menus packed with fresh, seasonal ingredients. Choose from the Cuckfield menu or the sevencourse tasting menu.

### What's the accommodation like?

Enjoy your own sitting room in the

oak-panelled Master suite, sleep in a fourposter in The Charles Room, or book a suite in the spa building in the historic walled garden. **How much?** From £199

a night for a double room with breakfast.

Ockenden Manor Hotel & Spa, 01444 416111, hshotels.co.uk.



FEATURE TARA KING, COLUMBA COLIVET PHOTOGRAPHS (GARDEN) TIMEINCUKCONTENT.COM; (BOOK, FACE MASKS) KATIE HOWEY/RHAPSODY; (BEE) ALUN CALLENDER









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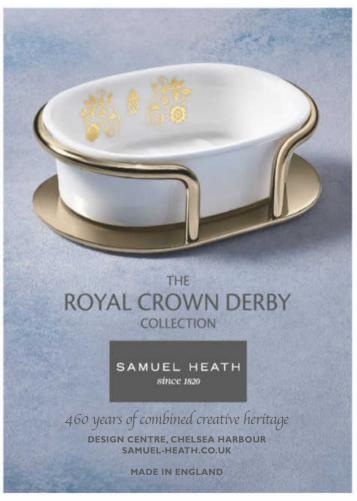
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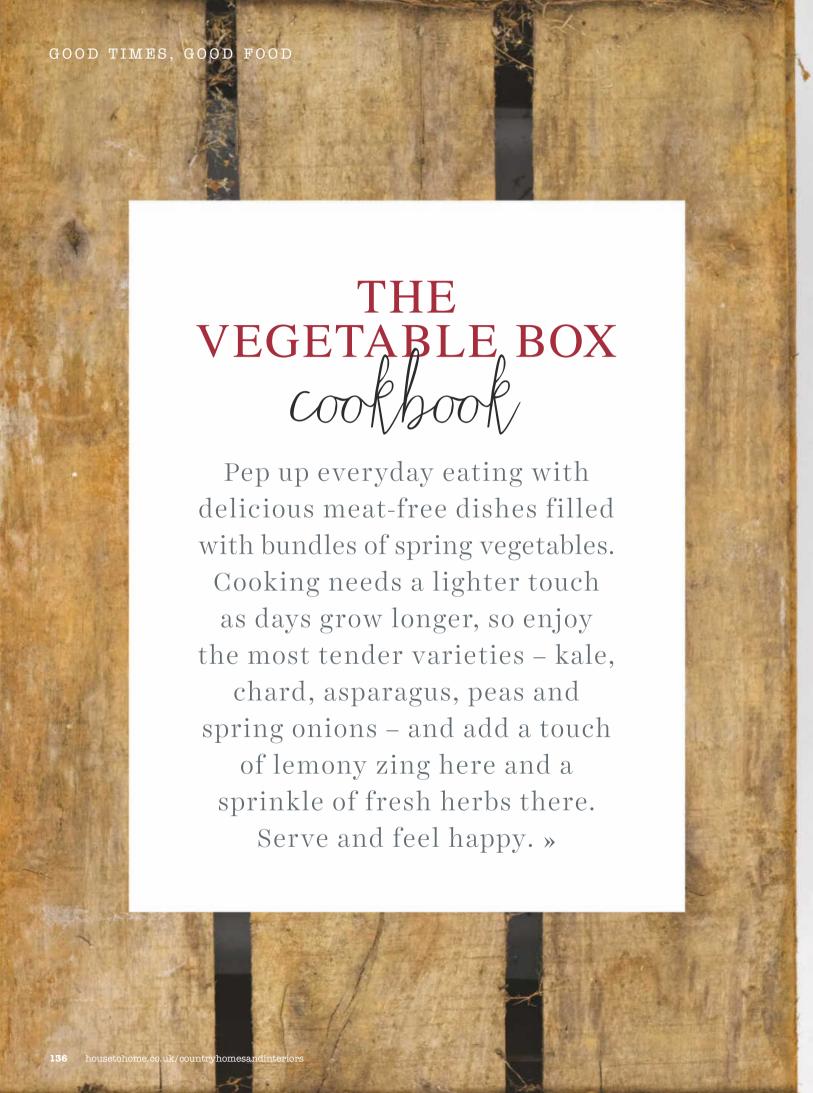
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### SESAME ROASTED VEGETABLES

Baby spring vegetables dressed in a seedy coating are served with zingy fresh dipping sauces. SERVES 4-5

### For the carrots

8-10 baby carrots with tops, trimmed to leave a small tip of green at the top 50ml extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling Salt and freshly ground black pepper 190g mixed black and white sesame seeds For the asparagus

2 free-range egg whites 1/2 tsp soy sauce

Pinch of freshly ground black pepper 190g mixed black and white sesame seeds 450g tender asparagus, trimmed

For the mushrooms

225g button mushrooms 1 free-range egg, beaten 125g mixed black and white sesame seeds 1 tsp garlic powder, optional Soured cream with chopped chives, flat-leaf parsley or coriander; sweet and sour sauce with chopped spring onion, to serve

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas 6. Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper. 2 Bring a pan of salted water to the boil,
- add the carrots and cook for about 8 minutes, until just tender. Drain and refresh under cold running water, then drain on kitchen paper. Arrange the carrots in a single layer on the baking tray and drizzle with a little olive oil. Season, then sprinkle over the sesame seeds and drizzle with a little more oil. Roast for 10 minutes and remove from the oven.
- 3 Meanwhile, beat the egg whites until broken, but not foamy. Stir in the soy sauce and pepper. Pour the sesame seeds into a shallow bowl. Dip each asparagus spear into the egg white mixture, then into the sesame seeds, completely covering each spear. Dip each mushroom into the beaten whole egg, shake off any excess and then roll in the sesame seeds and garlic powder, if using. Arrange the asparagus and mushrooms on the baking tray with the part-cooked carrots.
- 4 Continue roasting all the vegetables for 10-15 minutes, until tender. Serve with the two dips.

### CHEESE AND CHARD STRUDEL

Chard's nutty flavour works well alongside strong cheese and tomatoes in a savoury filo parcel. SERVES 4

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 75g roasted hazelnuts, finely chopped, plus extra to sprinkle
- 100g young Swiss chard leaves, trimmed and chopped
- 2 tsp cornflour
- 6 sheets filo pastry
- 4-5 tbsp melted butter
- 1 tbsp ground hazelnuts
- 110g sheep's cheese, such as feta, Manchego or Roquefort
- 2-3 firm tomatoes, diced and deseeded Chopped flat-leaf parsley, to garnish
- 1 Heat the oil in a pan and gently sauté the onion and garlic for a few minutes before adding the hazelnuts, then the chard. Cook gently until the chard has just wilted.
- 2 Mix together the cornflour and 150ml water and add to the pan, stirring well. Cook for a further minute until slightly thickened. Set aside to cool
- **3** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas 6. Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper.
- 4 Take a sheet of filo and lay it on a worktop with a long side in front of you. Cover remaining filo with a slightly damp tea towel. Brush the sheet with melted butter and sprinkle with the ground hazelnuts. Top with another sheet of filo and brush with melted butter. Repeat the layers, brushing each pastry layer with butter and finishing with the final sheet of filo pastry. Brush the top sheet with melted butter.
- 5 Spread the chard mixture over the pastry, leaving a 2.5cm margin around the edge. Crumble the cheese over the top, then arrange the tomatoes on top. Roll up from a short end and place on the baking tray, with the join underneath. Brush with the remaining butter.
- 6 Bake for about 25 minutes, until the pastry is golden and crisping up nicely. Sprinkle with the extra chopped roasted hazelnuts and garnish with the chopped parsley. >>





### KALE AND RICOTTA LASAGNE

Vitamin-rich kale, creamy ricotta and baked tomatoes combine in this colourful dish. SERVES 4-6

For the cheese sauce

850ml full-fat milk
55g butter, plus extra for greasing
25g cornflour
1 bay leaf
60g grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
For the kale filling

25g butter
600g kale
225g ricotta cheese
Grated nutmeg
400g grated mozzarella cheese
12 sheets of lasagne
3-4 firm tomatoes, sliced
Olive oil, for brushing
Basil, to garnish

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Fan160°C/Gas 4. For the cheese sauce, whisk the milk, butter, cornflour and bay leaf in a pan over a medium heat to simmering point. Reduce heat and simmer very gently for 5 minutes. Stir in 50g of the Parmesan, then remove from heat, discard the bay leaf and cover surface directly with clingfilm to prevent a skin forming. 2 To make the kale filling, heat the butter in a large pan, then add the kale and a little salt. Cover and cook over a medium heat for about 4 minutes, until wilted. Drain well, then squeeze out remaining liquid. Chop finely, then transfer to a bowl. Add the ricotta, 150ml of the cheese sauce and season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Mix well, then stir in half the mozzarella. 3 Spoon some of the cheese sauce into the bottom of a greased baking dish, add a layer of kale filling, then some lasagne sheets, tearing to fit. Repeat, but this time adding onethird of the mozzarella too, then some lasagne sheets. Repeat again, finishing with a layer of pasta, the remaining sauce and the remaining Parmesan and mozzarella. Arrange the tomato slices on top and brush with a little oil. 4 Bake for 50-60 minutes, until golden brown.

Leave to stand for 10 minutes. Garnish with basil.



### SPRING RISOTTO WITH PEAS

This creamy risotto is bursting with the fresh green flavours of peas, broad beans and spinach.  ${\tt SERVES}\ 4$ 

1 tbsp olive oil
100g cold butter, diced
1 small onion, chopped
1-2 garlic cloves, crushed
175g risotto rice
100ml white wine
600ml hot vegetable stock
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
200g each fresh shelled peas and podded broad beans (or use frozen and increase the cooking time slightly, see recipe)
10-15 spinach leaves
50g Parmesan cheese, shaved
Pea shoots, to garnish

1 Heat the oil and 25g of the butter in a large shallow pan and soften the onion and garlic over a low heat until transparent. Add the rice and stir to coat each grain. Increase the heat and add the wine, cooking until absorbed.

2 Gradually add the stock, a ladleful at a time, and stir until absorbed, before adding more. Continue cooking for about 20 minutes, until rice is tender with a little bite. Season to taste.

3 Cook the peas and beans for 2-3 minutes >>



# A delicious blend with BUTTER and OLIVE OIL\*





in boiling salted water (adding an extra 1-2 minutes if using frozen). Add the spinach for the last minute of cooking time. Drain well.

4 Remove the risotto from the heat and stir in remaining butter, Parmesan, peas, beans and spinach. Season, then garnish with pea shoots.

#### ITALIAN STYLE SPRING SALAD

This satisfying salad includes croutons and mozzarella, plus the fresh zip of lemon and capers.  ${\tt SERVES~4-6}$ 

1 slightly stale crusty loaf, torn into chunks
110ml olive oil, plus extra for greasing
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
450g slender asparagus spears
50ml red wine vinegar
Juice of 1 lemon
170-200ml extra-virgin olive oil
1 small head radicchio, cut into strips
Green salad leaves, such as lamb's lettuce
450g mozzarella cheese, pulled into chunks
2 hard-boiled eggs, roughly chopped
1 tbsp capers, rinsed
Few sprigs of basil, leaves torn
Pea shoots, to garnish

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Fan 160°C/Gas 4. To make the croutons, toss the bread chunks in the olive oil to coat them. Place on a greased baking tray and bake for 10-12 minutes, shaking around once or twice, until crisp and lightly coloured on the outside, but still soft within. Set aside to cool.
- 2 Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil. Add the asparagus and cook briefly, until just tender. Refresh under cold running water, then place on absorbent kitchen paper to drain.
- **3** To make the dressing, whisk together the vinegar, lemon juice and extra-virgin olive oil. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
- 4 In a large bowl, combine the croutons, asparagus, radicchio, salad leaves, mozzarella cheese, chopped eggs, capers and basil. Add the dressing and toss to combine. Season again and transfer to serving plates garnished with the pea shoots.

#### SPRING ONION BREAD

Spring onions and rosemary are added to the dough in the tin to achieve a rustic effect.

For the dough

300ml warm water

7g fast-action dried yeast

300g strong white flour, plus extra for dusting 200g Italian-style 00 grade pasta flour

2 tbsp caster sugar

1/2 tbsp salt

100ml extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to drizzle 1 tbsp chopped rosemary, plus extra to sprinkle Sea salt, to sprinkle

For the topping

- 2 bunches of spring onions, trimmed 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar ½ tbsp caster sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 To make the dough, briefly mix the warm water and yeast. Leave 5 minutes, until frothy. Place the flours, sugar and salt in a bowl and make a well in the centre. Pour in the yeast mixture and mix with your hands until the dough just comes together. Add the oil and rosemary and mix to form a loose, soft dough.
- **2** On a floured surface, knead the dough for 10 minutes, until smooth and elastic. Shape into a ball and place in an oiled bowl. Cover and leave in a warm place for 1-2 hours, until doubled in size.
- **4** Preheat the oven to 170°C/Fan 150°C/Gas 3. Place the spring onions on a lined baking tray. Sprinkle with the vinegar, sugar and salt, tossing to coat. Bake for 6-8 minutes until soft. Set aside.
- **5** Line a 20x30cm baking tin. Turn out the dough and knead gently for a few seconds. Carefully lift the dough into the tin. Gently push to the sides. Arrange the onions on top and dot with rosemary. Sprinkle over sea salt and drizzle with oil. Cover loosely with oiled clingfilm and leave in a warm place to rise for 1 hour.
- 6 Preheat the oven to 220°C/Fan 200°C/Gas 7. Bake for 10-15 minutes until golden, then reduce heat to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas 6 and bake for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven, drizzle with more oil, then leave in tin for 5 minutes. Serve warm, sprinkled with rosemary and sea salt.

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# 'I WANTED TO CREATE CLASSIC GIRLS' DRESSES IN BEAUTIFUL FABRICS'

# Children's clothing designer Hannah Waring

y girls were the main reason
I started my business Busy Little
Things,' says Peak District-based
Hannah Waring of her daughters Delilah,
eight, Daphne, six, and Iris, four. 'I found
it was very hard to dress them the way
I wanted. Regardless of budget, I couldn't
find good-quality, unusual clothing.'

Hannah loved traditional-looking dresses and skirts, such as pinafores, but couldn't source them easily and this gave her the idea to make the girls' clothes herself. She gravitated towards the retro dress styles of the 60s and 70s, and when her mother-in-law found some old patterns she took them to a seamstress who showed her easy ways of making them up.

'When I started, I had no sewing skills at all so just kept the first patterns as classic as possible,' she says. 'As the dresses were simple in style, I focused on beautiful fabrics and trims to make them stand out. I'm drawn to designs with a happy, retro feel, such as ditsy florals, animals and polka dots. I'd test out dresses on friends

who had girls to see what they thought and everybody loved the combination of traditional styling with vibrant fabrics.

'It was a leap of faith to see if I could make it work as a business. I'd never really enjoyed my previous jobs in advertising so felt this was my chance to be more creative and content with my work, as well as being around for my children.'

Hannah started the business using the last £1,000 of her redundancy money, buying a sewing machine, an overlocker and the first batch of fabric for the dresses. 'I wasn't in a position to take any financial risks with Busy Little Things so it was vital that it funded itself right from the beginning,' says Hannah. She sold dresses through friends, word of mouth, playgroups that her daughters attended and small fairs, moving on to bigger fairs, such as the Fabulous Places Christmas Market in Derby, the Treacle Market in Macclesfield and Vintage & Quirky locally.

Hannah set up a website about six months after she started the business »



## What I love most ...

# 'THE JOY OF MAKING SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE APPRECIATE WHILE BEING ABLE TO BE AT HOME FOR MY CHILDREN'

as a way of viewing rather than buying products, then gradually developed her Facebook page, which has been the main focus of online sales activity. Recently, she has redeveloped her website so customers can view the whole range of clothes and fabrics, and order bespoke dresses. She sells ready-made clothes through Etsy, while Betty's Sewing Box in Ashbourne stocks her dresses and skirts.

'I've worked with Betty's Sewing Box on a few projects, including a charity night. It's been great to collaborate with other like-minded people as it has added another dimension to my business, as well as allowing me to reach new customers and increase my profile.'

Social media has been a very important element in Hannah's success. 'When you have a business in a rural area, being creative with your marketing is essential,' she says. She discovered that because most of her customers are mothers, they shop online once their children are in bed, so she has had to work out ways to adapt to their needs and not just expect them to be able to come to her.

Busy Little Things is now in its fourth year and because Iris has started school, Hannah can concentrate on pushing the business forward. 'Over the past few years I have spent a lot of time experimenting with the details of each dress and skirt, which means I am now ready to be a little more ambitious and extend my range of clothes,' says Hannah.

The range currently consists of six off-the-peg dress designs, from everyday options, such as the Pinafore, Playtime and Peasant dresses, to the Party dress with a lined bodice, gathered full skirt and a big bow to tie at the waist. Available in sizes up to 10 years of age, a Pinafore dress costs from £20. Hannah also sells Mummy and Me sets comprising a girl's skirt and an adult version, as well as skirts and dungarees, board shorts for boys, baby bibs and baby knickers to go with the dresses. Her fabric designs include Liberty prints and her bespoke service is very popular. Customers can also buy toy kittens made for Hannah by Jane Livesey of handmade toy company PinkyMinky (pinkyminky.com), which has patterned dresses to match the range.

The kitchen table remains the hub of the business for now and even the company strapline 'Gorgeous Children's Clothes Handmade In Derbyshire' was chosen to reinforce the fact that everything is lovingly made at home by Hannah. 'I'm sure that at some point I'll have to move into a studio, but working in the kitchen still appeals right now as it means there's always a cut-off point for my working day as the table has to be cleared when the girls come home from school!'

≅ Busy Little Things, 01629 540386, busylittlethings.co.uk. ≫



#### MY COUNTRY BUSINESS

















## Small business advice

# TAKE A KITCHEN-TABLE BUSINESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Follow our guide to the key ways to expand your business







For Hannah Waring, being selfemployed in a rural village has meant she's had to work hard to find ways to reach out to her customers and develop her business. She's addressed three key areas to help with the expansion:

#### Diversify and create new products.

In the early stages, Hannah thought she could carry on using the same patterns and just change the fabrics, but she soon discovered that wasn't enough and that her customers wanted to see new styles. Productivity blogger Annie Mueller (anniemueller.com) suggests four steps to diversify your business...

- Know your limits and look at what you have to invest both financially and in terms of resources.
- Investigate the possibilities you have. Having the ideas is often not the problem, it's choosing the right ones for your business. Could you go deeper into what you are doing already to provide more for your customers or step up to the next level of product or service? What are your competitors offering that you are not and what other product or service could you provide that would complement your business?
   From the ideas you have worked on, what fits well with what you already do? Remember, you don't have to start from

scratch as diversification means to grow

in a new direction, not to fragment.

• Finally, get the balance of growth and maintenance right. New things can be demanding so don't lose sight of the upkeep required for the current business needs of your company.

#### Be creative with your marketing.

Take a look at Women Unlimited (womenun limitedworldwide.com) - a community website for women who are starting a business or want to grow one. Theresa Sheridan of Theresa Sheridan Designs (theresasheridan.com) has these top tips for successful marketing...

- Write regular press releases and send to local newspapers, national magazines and websites related to your business.
- Join your local Chamber of Commerce for networking opportunities and to show your sense of community.
- Create a customer loyalty programme.
- Write a monthly newsletter and start an email marketing campaign.
- Join with a non-competitive business to offer a promotional package.
- Write a book or ebook that you can give away on your website.
- Put together a marketing video and upload on to YouTube, then embed it into your website and any other social media platforms you have.
- Make sure you are set up on all the social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram and keep as active as possible on them all.

Employ the right kind of people during busy patches. Hannah has employed another mum to help during busy periods and needed to find a person she could trust and who cared as much about her products as she did. 'You have to take on people that you have something in common with and who know and understand what the customer likes and wants,' she says. Mashable (mashable.com), a leading global media company, asked entrepreneurs and small business owners about hiring people. Here are three fundamental points to consider:

- Be clear about the role of your employee when you advertise and be sure to include the salary - even if it is 'DOE' (depending on experience) - benefits and necessary skills.
- Figure out where you would be likely to find your potential candidates physically or virtually. For example, if you are looking for someone with a niche passion, look on Meet Up (meetup.com), where you can find groups/societies with people that have something in common with you.
- When it comes to interviews, remember that skills can be taught but attitude, personality and passion can't.
   Better to bring someone on board who has less talent but fits the company culture rather than a talented candidate who wouldn't gel with you or your team.

The one lesson I've learned...

'QUALITY ALWAYS HAS TO COME FIRST. YOU CANNOT CUT ANY CORNERS IN TERMS OF THE PRODUCT AS YOUR REPUTATION IS EVERYTHING'

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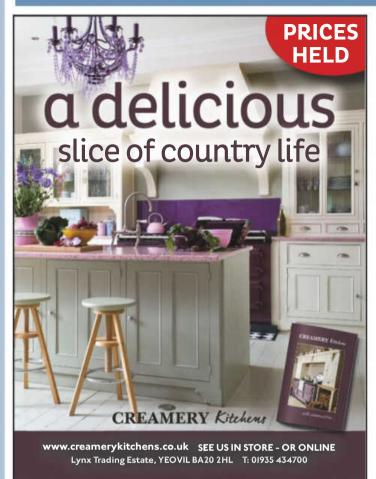
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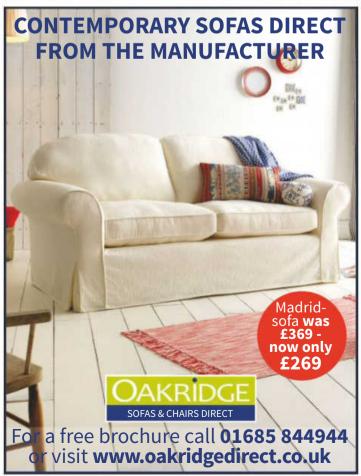
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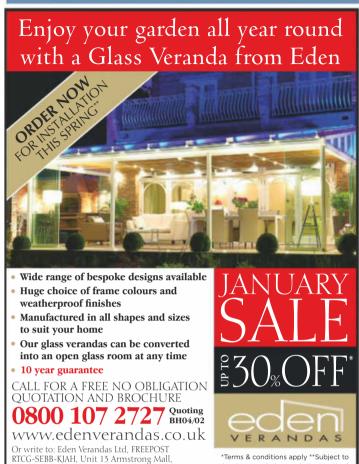
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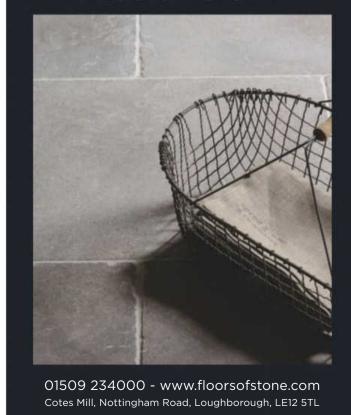


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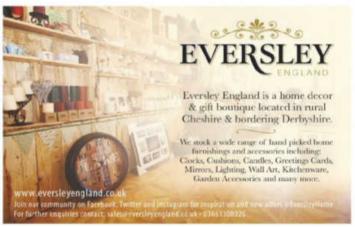
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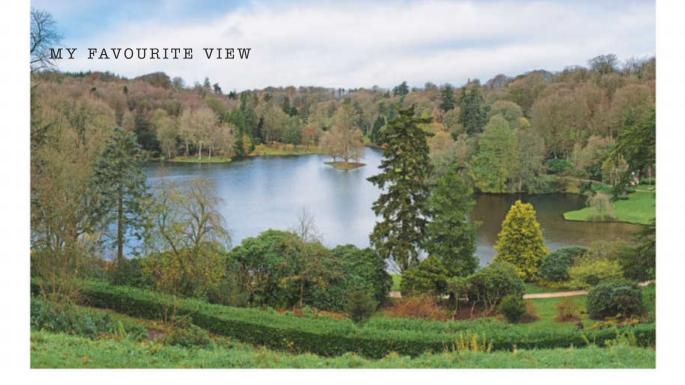
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## 'YOU CAN LOSE YOURSELF IN THE BEAUTY OF STOURHEAD'

# Director-General of the National Trust, Dame Helen Ghosh

first visited Stourhead, in Wiltshire, 30 years ago, before the idea of working for the National Trust was even a dream. It was after Christmas and my husband and I arrived at the Spread Eagle Inn, by the gates, long after nightfall. The next day



we woke to a vision of what seemed like paradise. A heavy frost had transformed the landscape into a glittering stage set, smoke was rising from the gardener's rustic cottage, and the whole garden was spread out before us in all its classical perfection.

Although I've visited Stourhead many times since, I still prefer it in winter, when its 'bones' are so easy to see. Many visitors love it in spring and early summer, for the outstanding rhododendron collection. But autumn at Stourhead is equally beautiful – our head gardener, Alan Power, does an inspirational piece every year on Radio 4's PM programme, painting a word picture of its autumn glories. In the storms of late 2014 and early 2015, we lost around 400 trees across the estate, and replacing those as well as restoring the Victorian pinetum are priorities for us.

Most visitors to Stourhead get their first glimpse of the garden by the entrance gate. But Henry Hoare had conceived a rather more subtle approach when he started work in the 1740s. Visitors would have walked down from the house, with tantalising views of a Greek temple here and a Christian church there,

enabling Hoare to tell a more complex philosophical story about both the nature of faith and ideals of beauty, until the whole was laid out before them. To stand on the Temple of Apollo steps, high above the lake, is the way to see it as Hoare might have wanted.

Stourhead is a prime example of the 18th-century English landscape garden, with Hoare imagining a 'picturesque' garden, like a scene from a landscape painting. Inspired by works by artists such as Claude and Gaspard Dughet, Hoare dammed a stream to create the lake and surrounded it with temples, Gothic buildings and carefully constructed views. Contemporaries were intrigued by the garden's natural style, describing it as 'a living work of art'. A jewel in the National Trust crown, the garden gets over 400,000 visitors a year, yet despite the numbers you can still lose yourself in its beauty.

When the children were growing up, we'd work off their surplus energy on walks through surrounding woodland to Alfred's Tower, with its views out across Somerset and Glastonbury Tor. Today's visitors have occasional access to the islands in the centre of the lake. On my bucket list would be a garden party there for family and friends - if the staff ever allowed it!

From walks in ancient woodland to Easter Egg Trails, Stourhead appeals to all ages. Stourhead, near Mere, Wiltshire BA12 6QF, 01747 841152, nationaltrust.org.uk/stourhead.





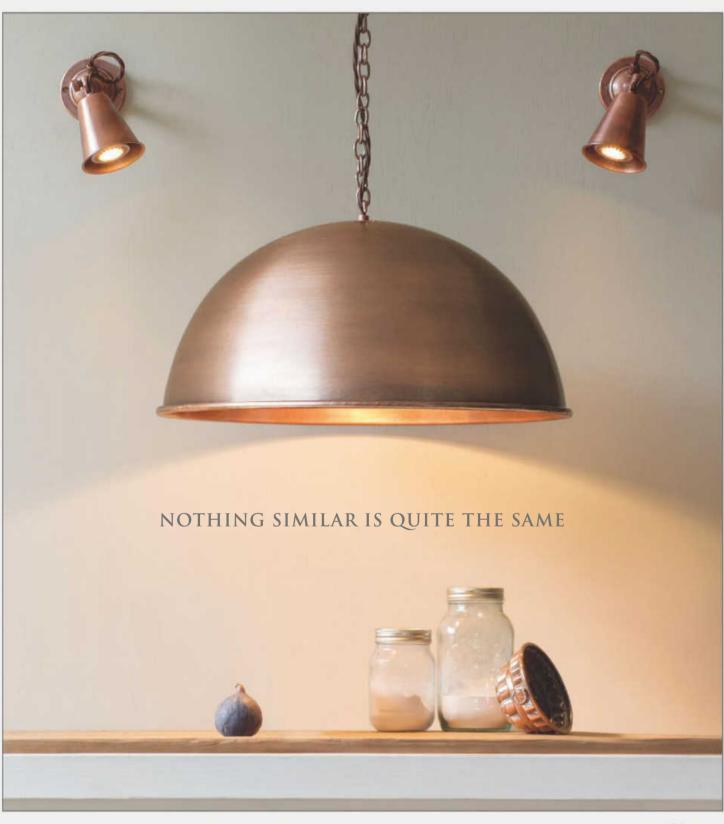
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